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UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM

BULLETIN 250

U.S. MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY

Papers 59–64
On History

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The scholarly and scientific publications of the United States National Museum include two series, *Proceedings of the United States National Museum* and *United States National Museum Bulletin*.

In these series, the Museum publishes original articles and monographs dealing with the collections and work of its constituent museums—The Museum of Natural History and the Museum of History and Technology—setting forth newly acquired facts in the fields of anthropology, biology, history, geology, and technology. Copies of each publication are distributed to libraries, to cultural and scientific organizations, and to specialists and others interested in the different subjects.

The *Proceedings*, begun in 1878, are intended for the publication, in separate form, of shorter papers from the Museum of Natural History. These are gathered in volumes, octavo in size, with the publication date of each paper recorded in the table of contents of the volume.

In the *Bulletin* series, the first of which was issued in 1875, appear longer, separate publications consisting of monographs (occasionally in several parts) and volumes in which are collected works on related subjects. *Bulletins* are either octavo or quarto in size, depending on the needs of the presentation. Since 1902 papers relating to the botanical collections of the Museum of Natural History have been published in the *Bulletin* series under the heading *Contributions from the United States National Herbarium*, and since 1959, in *Bulletins* titled "Contributions from the Museum of History and Technology," have been gathered shorter papers relating to the collections and research of that Museum.

The present collection of Contributions, Papers 59–64, comprises *Bulletin* 250. Each of these papers has been previously published in separate form. The year of publication is shown on the last page of each paper.

FRANK A. TAYLOR
Director, United States National Museum

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FLOOR COVERINGS IN 18th-CENTURY AMERICA

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PORTRAIT OF CHIEF JUSTICE AND MRS. OLIVER ELLSWORTH
by Ralph Earl, 1792
(*Courtesy of Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut.*)

Figure 1.—The floor shown in this room of a Connecticut house is completely covered with a bold design of large stripes and medallions in shades of black, red, orange, and white. The Ellsworths are seated in the library of their house which by artistic license is seen through the open window to be a white mansion with a red roof.

Rodris Roth

FLOOR COVERINGS IN 18th-CENTURY AMERICA

Floor coverings were the exception rather than the rule in the 18th-century house, difficult as this is to believe today. Pictures and writings of the period serve as our most direct evidence of their existence. The author fully illustrates in this paper the various kinds of floor coverings available in the 18th century and recounts the history of their use—from the Oriental or "Turkey" carpets through Brussels, Axminster, and even sand. She relates interesting accounts of their sale, maintenance, and the wide variety of colors offered, as well as their selection according to the decor of the rooms. All of this information is spiced with quotes from Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and others, on the same subject: floor coverings. Her study in this field has extended over a period of many years, but the major research for this paper was accomplished during 1959–1961.

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Introduction

Floor coverings were the exception rather than the rule in the 18th century. Americans, however, who wanted and could afford to have floor coverings in their houses were able to choose from a variety of types. Some of the kinds available and used were Oriental or "Turkey" carpets, floorcloths, straw mats, and ingrain, Wilton, Brussels, and Axminster carpeting and carpets. Although few if any movable floor coverings with known histories of use in this country during the 18th century exist today, evidence of the types available, and where and how they were used in domestic surroundings, survives in the writings and pictures of the period.

Carpets and rugs, of course, have an ancient history long antedating the 18th century. In the Western World, however, as even a cursory look at European paintings reveals, they were seldom to be found under any feet except those of royalty or nobility, and then

usually as a mark of rank rather than as an item of household furnishing. Until they came into general use as floor coverings in the 18th century, Oriental carpets and rugs were used as they had been since their introduction into Europe from the Near East in the 15th and 16th centuries—as covers for tables, beds, and cupboards, and as hangings on walls and at windows.[1] According to 17th-century American wills and inventories, the colonists adhered to this practice whether they lived in Massachusetts and had a "carpitt and tabell" as listed in a 1644 inventory, or in Virginia and had a "drawing [i.e., drawtop] table and Turkey Carpet" as recorded in a 1673 will.[2] Oriental rugs and carpets continued to be used by the colonists in these ways well into the 18th century.

Types of Floor Coverings

ORIENTAL

Oriental carpets, occasionally referred to as Persians, were called "Turkey" carpets from their place of origin or export. The homemade imitations also were known as "Turkey" or "Turkey-work" carpets. Whether called Oriental or Turkey, the carpets were used as table covers by persons of importance and wealth in the colonies until almost the middle of the 18th century. This is shown in two paintings, *George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, and his Wife and Family* (fig. 10), painted in 1729 by John Smibert, and *Portrait of Isaac Royall and Family* (fig. 2), done in 1741 by Robert Feke. In both portraits the sitters are grouped about a table covered with an Oriental carpet.[3] The fact that such carpets were recorded in oil suggests not only that they were highly valued and that ownership of them was considered of importance, but also that their use as table covers was appropriate as well as in fashion at the time.

In fact, the word carpet was defined as "a Covering for the Table" in the 1720s and 1730s according to English dictionaries such as Nathan Bailey's *Universal Etymological Dictionary*. It was only in subsequent editions that the added meaning of carpet appeared as "a Covering for a Table, Passage, or Floor." This distinction in function was being made in the colonies at about the same time and is indicated by the use of the adjective "floor" to describe some carpets in the household inventories of deceased persons.

For instance, "1 Floor Carpet" valued at £7 10s. was mentioned in "An After Inventory of Sundrys belonging to the Estate of Mrs. Margaret Claxton, late of Boston, Widow Deced." recorded in 1746.[4] It is difficult to say with any certainty whether Turkey carpets also were used as floor coverings in colonial houses during the earlier part of the 18th century, as they were in some of the better English houses. Oriental carpets, however, were generally thought of in terms of table and furniture coverings rather than floor coverings until about the middle of the 18th century in the colonies.

Some insight into the transition of the Oriental carpet from furniture to floor covering can be gained from inventories of household furnishings such as that of Mr. Nathaniel Cunningham, a resident of Massachusetts living in the Boston area. In the list of Cunningham's belongings, recorded in 1748 shortly after his death, besides "1 Canvas Floor Cloth £4" located in the great chamber on the first floor, there were "2 old Turkey Carpetts £7" in the upper garret and "2 Turkey Carpets" worth £4 in the little upstairs chamber. In contrast to these Turkey carpets were those listed in the same inventory but "At the New House" as "1 fine Large New Turkey Carpet £60 [and] 1 D[itt]o. somewhat worn £30."[5] The difference in location, the new house as against the garret and an upper chamber, and the difference in the adjectives, new, fine, and large, as against old, are differences which suggest that the Turkey carpets

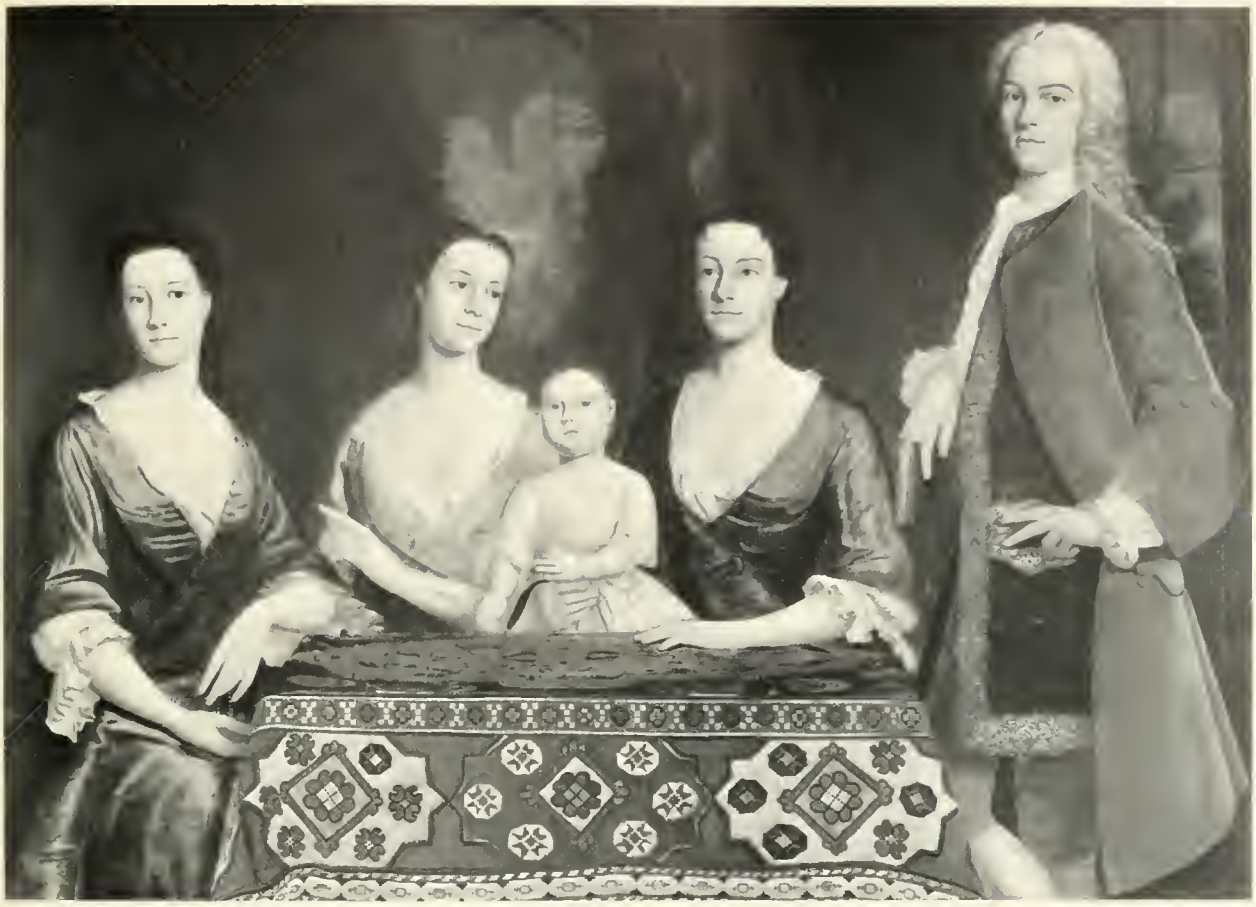
[1] W. G. Thompson, "Carpets," rev. by G. F. Wingfield Digby in *The Dictionary of English Furniture*, edit. Percy Macquoid and Ralph Edwards (rev. ed.; London: Country Life, Ltd., 1954), vol. 1, pp. 203–204; Wilhelm von Bode and Ernst Kühnel, *Antique Rugs from the Near East*, transl. Charles G. Ellis (rev. ed.; Berlin: Klinkhardt and Biermann, 1958), figs. 34–35 and pp. 52–56.

[2] Inventory of Mrs. Joanna Cummins, Salem, Mar. 17, 1644. In *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts*, edit. George Francis Dow (Salem: The Essex Institute, 1911–1921), vol. 1, pp. 66–67; Will of Mrs. Elizabeth Butler, May 17, 1673, on record at Essex Court House. In W. G. Standard, "Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (July 1895), vol. 3, p. 64.

[3] Joseph V. McMullan, "The Turkey Carpet in Early America," *Antiques* (March 1954), vol. 65, p. 221.

[4] After Inventory of Mrs. Margaret Claxton, March 13, 1746. MS, Suffolk County, Massachusetts, Probate Court Record Books, vol. 39, p. 428; seen on microfilm, United States National Museum. Hereinafter cited as Suffolk Probate Books.

[5] Inventory of Nathaniel Cunningham, Feb. 6, 1748. In Suffolk Probate Books, vol. 42, pp. 155–164.



PORTRAIT OF ISAAC ROYALL AND FAMILY
by Robert Feke, 1741
(*Courtesy of Harvard University and The Fogg Art Museum.*)

Figure 2.—A Turkey carpet used as a table cover is a prominent feature of this colonial painting which resembles the earlier portrait of the Berkeley family by Smibert.

at the new house were probably used as floor coverings while the others, no longer in fashion as furniture coverings, had been relegated to the attic or a room upstairs.

Further proof that Oriental carpets underwent a change in function about the middle of the 18th century is found in a newspaper advertisement in the *Boston Gazette* of March 26, 1754.[6] It announced the sale of "a Parcel of valuable Household Stuff," among which was "a very large *Turkey* Carpet, measuring Eleven and an half by Eighteen and an half Feet." From the size of the carpet there can be little doubt that it was intended for any use other than as a floor covering. A carpet of such ample proportions must have been very valuable when one realizes that a Turkey carpet measuring only four and a half by three feet was so prized by its owner as to warrant the following advertisement in the *Boston News-Letter* of February 20, 1755, that mentions items stolen from a house, including "a Turkey Carpet of various Colours, about a yard and half in length, and a Yard wide, fring'd on each End" for which there was a reward of three dollars. Some 25 years later "1 P[iece]s Turkey Carpet," presumably of small dimension, was valued at £4 in a Boston inventory, that of

[6] This and most other Boston newspaper references have been taken from GEORGE FRANCIS DOW, *The Arts and Crafts in New England, 1704–1775* (Topsfield, Mass.: The Wayside Press, 1927).

Captain Fortesque Vernon, recorded on February 19, 1779.[7] Obviously, Oriental carpets whatever their size, were greatly esteemed in the colonies.

Turkey carpets were highly prized because of their beauty, but undoubtedly rarity and cost also were factors that influenced their desirability. Even in an age when most things were made by hand, the time and labor involved in the manufacture of Oriental carpets were great. This was especially so if the surface was a pile one because each of the short pieces of yarn standing up on the surface that made the pile was knotted by hand to the warp or lengthwise threads. This was done a row at a time. After a row of pile had been knotted, a weft or crosswise thread was woven through the warp threads. Then another row of pile was knotted and a thread woven across in front of it, and so on, until the carpet was finished. The so-called Turkey-work, the western imitation of Oriental pile rugs, also involved hand knotting. This home product of amateur needlewomen was made by threading yarns through a coarse fabric, then knotting and cutting them. Nevertheless, the fine, tight-knotting characteristic of the imported Turkey rugs and the resulting long-wearing, firm construction was seldom matched by the hand-knotted pile carpets made in the West. Durability, therefore, was another factor that accounted for the high value placed on Orientals. In addition to the considerable time and labor involved in producing Oriental carpets, the methods of transporting them from the Near East were slow and uncertain. As a result, Turkey carpets were expensive, and the number available at any one time was limited. Consequently, their use in the colonies was determined to a great extent by the quantity on hand and the size of one's pocketbook.

This seems to be verified by the newspaper advertisements of the period. The Oriental carpets offered for sale seldom appear in notices of recently arrived imports, but rather in advertisements for an auction or "Public Vendue" of household furniture. Many of the Turkey carpets available at the time were not new but used, presumably because the supply was limited. Or they may have been part of the booty obtained from a captured ship or "prize" and, not being legally imported, were sold at public auction as part of the furnishings of a household. They also may have been part of some merchandise being sold at auction by a shopkeeper or merchant needing cash or wishing to dispose quickly of surplus or dated goods. This situation was not restricted to any one area, but was common to all the colonies, northern, mid-Atlantic, and southern. According to an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* of September 5, 1751, Turkey carpets were among a "Great Variety of fashionable Furniture" which was "to be SOLD, for ready Money or short Credit." [8] A year later in the *Maryland Gazette* of June 25, an Annapolis merchant announced that he had just imported from London and had for sale, secondhand, "a compleat set of household and kitchen Furniture" that included "Turkey and English Carpets." [9] Northern colonists, too, were informed of the sale of Oriental carpets in a similar manner. Notices listing "a Turkey Carpet" among household items to be sold by public vendue appeared in the *Boston Gazette* of January 8, 1754, and April 17, 1758. Shoppers reading the *Boston News-Letter* found similar announcements of sale by public vendue. "Sundry Turkey Carpets" were part of the "Very good Household Furniture" advertised on August 7, 1760; "Turkey . . . Carpets" were part of the "various articles of household furniture" advertised on June 16, 1763; and "Turkey and other Carpets" were part of "the genteel House Furniture" advertised on August 30, 1770—all to be sold at auctions. Notices of this type were the rule, and advertisements like the following two of William Greenleaf were the exception. One in the *Boston News-Letter* of January 29, 1761, announced that Mr. Greenleaf had imported from London and Bristol and had on sale at his store a number of items including "Rich Persian carpets, 3, 4, and 4 by 5 yards square." The other advertisement which appeared a few years later in the *Boston Gazette* of December 12, 1763, mentioned "a few very handsome Persia Carpets 4 yards and 3 yards square." In general, advertisements such as these two were

[7] Inventory of Fortesque Vernon, Feb. 19, 1779. In Suffolk Probate Books, vol. 78, pp. 45–49.

[8] This and most other Virginia newspaper references have been taken from the *Virginia Gazette* on microfilm accompanying Lester J. Cappon and Stella F. Duff, *Virginia Gazette Index, 1736–1780* (Williamsburg: The Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1950).

[9] This and most other Maryland, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina newspaper references have been taken from Alfred Coxe Prime, *The Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia, Maryland and South Carolina, 1721–1785* (Topsfield, Mass.: The Walpole Society, 1929), and *The Arts and Crafts in Philadelphia, Maryland and South Carolina, 1786–1800* (Topsfield, Mass.: The Walpole Society, 1932).

rare, and it seems safe to assume that the market for secondhand or used Turkey carpets existed because few new Orientals were available.

Since the supply was limited, the use of Turkey carpets in colonial houses was also limited. For example, a survey of inventories recorded in 1758 from the Boston area, that is to say Suffolk County, Massachusetts, reveals the presence of floor coverings in only 3 out of some 75 listings of household furnishings registered that year. Of the three inventories which listed floor coverings, that of Mr. Edward Jackson of Boston was alone in including Orientals. In the "Front Room" of the Jackson house were "2 Turk & 2 homspn. Carpets 61/4."[10] Among the Suffolk County inventories recorded in the two preceding years, 1757 and 1756, a single entry for Turkey carpets was found. This was for "1 large Turkey Carpet 40/ [and] 1 small Do. 24/" listed in the inventory of Edward Tyng, Esq., of Boston, dated May 28, 1756, but taken the preceding September.[11] Some 20 years later, ownership of Orientals was still limited. Nine inventories with entries for underfoot furnishings of various kinds were found among the Suffolk County, Massachusetts, inventories recorded in 1777, but only one, that of Samuel Sewell, "late of Boston, an Absentee," listed "1 large Turkey Carpet." [12] The following year 4 out of about 115 inventories listed floor coverings. Turkey carpets, however, appeared in only one inventory, that of Joshua Winslow, Esq., of Boston, recorded November 6, 1778. Located in the "Front Chamber" downstairs of Winslow's house was "a Turkey Carpet £9" and upstairs a "Turkey Carpet 42/"—aside from the other kinds of floor coverings elsewhere in the house.[13] From the inventories studied, it appears that few households were graced with Turkey carpets. Also, it is significant that the above inventories with entries for Turkey carpets were among those with high total monetary valuations for the years in which they were recorded. Clearly, ownership of an Oriental was dependent upon one's wealth as well as upon the number of Turkey carpets available.

No doubt fashion and prestige also played a part in the purchase of a Turkey carpet. Then as now Oriental carpets provided a harmonious background for the numerous chairs and tables of mahogany or walnut, the objects of glass, ceramic, and silver, the rich and colorful fabrics, and the paintings and prints that constituted the furnishings of the principal rooms in the houses of well-to-do colonists. It may have been just such a setting Charles Carroll, barrister, had in mind when, in 1760, he wrote to Mr. William Anderson, merchant, in London. Among the various household furnishings ordered by this Maryland gentleman were "One Turkey Carpet suitable for a Room 25 feet Long and twenty Broad at about Ten Guineas one Ditto for a Room Twenty feet Long and Eighteen Broad at about six Guineas." [14] Oriental carpets also were the choice of other colonists. In a letter of 1765 addressed to her husband in London, Mrs. Benjamin Franklin gave the following description of the underfoot furnishings in their Philadelphia house and requested the addition of a Turkey carpet:

> The little south room . . . [has] on the floor, a carpet I bought cheap for the goodness; it is not quite new. The large carpet is in the blue room. . . . In the parlour there is a Scotch carpet which was found much fault found [*sic*] with. . . . As to curtains, I leave it to you to do as you like yourself; or if, as we talked before you went away, if you could meet with a Turkey carpet I should like it. . . . In the north room . . . [is] a small Scotch carpet on the floor.[15]

Happily, Mrs. Franklin's wish was granted. Benjamin Franklin, still in London in April of the following year, wrote to his wife that he was sending "A Large true Turkey Carpet cost 10 Guineas, for the Dining Parlour." [16] The desire of the Franklins for a Turkey carpet in addition to the other floor coverings already in the house is indicative of the value placed on this particular type of carpet in the 18th century. It further implies that Orientals were considered a good investment. And the decision that Franklin

[10] Inventory of Edward Jackson, Feb. 10, 1758. In Suffolk Probate Books, vol. 53, pp. 123–141.

[11] Inventory of Edward Tyng, September 1755 (sworn to May 28, 1756). Ibid., vol. 51, pp. 384–390.

[12] Inventory of Samuel Sewell, Aug. 29, 1777. Ibid., vol. 76, pp. 312–313.

[13] Inventory of Joshua Winslow, Nov. 6, 1778. Ibid., vol. 77, pp. 600–604.

[14] Invoice of goods enclosed in a letter from Charles Carroll, barrister, Annapolis, to Mr. William Anderson, London, September 1760. In "Letters of Charles Carroll, Barrister," *Maryland Historical Magazine* (December 1937), vol. 32, p. 367.

[15] Letter to Benjamin Franklin, London, from Mrs. Deborah Franklin, Philadelphia, fall of 1765. In Edward Riley, "Franklin's Home," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* (1953), new ser., vol. 43, part 1, p. 153.

[16] Letter from Benjamin Franklin, London, to Mrs. Deborah Franklin, Philadelphia, April 1766. In *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, edit. Albert Henry Smyth (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1905–1907), vol. 4, p. 450.

Mr. Jeremiah Lee
by John Singleton Copley, 1769
(*Courtesy of Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Conn.*)

Figure 3.—The Turkey carpet with fringed ends shown in this portrait was presumably used in Colonel Lee's newly built, three-story mansion in Marblehead, Massachusetts. Other indications of the merchant's wealth and importance are the ornate gilded table, gleaming silver inkstand, and drapery of elegant fabric.

obtain one in London reveals clearly that the supply of Oriental carpets in the colonies was limited.

While it is not certain whether fashion, prestige, or prudent investment accounted for the desires of Charles Carroll and Benjamin Franklin to have Turkey carpets, the fact that these carpets appear in both American and English portraits suggests that a certain amount of prestige was associated with the ownership of such a floor covering. A case in point is the portrait *Mr. Jeremiah Lee* (fig. 3), painted in 1769 by John Singleton Copley, in which the prosperous merchant of Marblehead, Massachusetts, is shown standing on a Turkey carpet.[17] Presumably the carpet was a possession of which Lee was proud and which he considered appropriate to his position in society.

Most Turkey carpets used as floor coverings seem to have been of a considerable size. The actual dimensions of Oriental carpets given in a few instances in newspaper advertisements already cited tend to confirm this and to indicate that there were two categories of sizes, "large" and "very large." A Turkey carpet measuring 11½ by 18½ feet was described as "very large." The previously mentioned "Rich Persian carpets" with dimensions 12 by 12, and 12 by 15 feet also would be in the "very large" category. A few of the Orientals used at "Richmond Hill," Aaron Burr's residence in New York City, fit this category since two for which dimensions were given were over 12 feet long. Besides the "1 Elegant Turkey carpet & 2 recess pieces" located in the "Blue or drawing room," the garret storeroom contained the following floor coverings according to the "Inventory of Furniture"[18] taken in 1797:

1 Turkey Carpet 12.6 by 11.6
1 ditto ditto 12 by 11.6
1 Turkey Carpet 10.6 by 6.6
1 Small carpet green and White.

While carpets measuring over 12 feet were described as "very large," those with dimensions under 12 feet were usually termed, simply, "large." For instance, the "one handsome large Carpet" that was advertised to be sold by public vendue in the *Boston News-Letter* of May 8, 1735, measured "9 Foot 6 Inches by 6 Foot 6 Inches." Consequently, the previously cited Persians with 9- by 9- foot dimensions would have been considered "large," also. The "large Carpets" that were advertised for sale in the *Boston News-Letter* on June 5, 1735, and April 15 of the following year were probably of corresponding proportions and perhaps of Near Eastern origin, too,

[17] Joseph V. McMullan, "The Oriental 'Carpitt' in Colonial America," *The Concise Encyclopedia of American Antiques*, edit. Helen Comstock (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., [1958]), vol. 1, p. 209.

[18] "The Furnishings of Richmond Hill in 1797. The Home of Aaron Burr in New York City," *The New-York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin* (April 1927), vol. 11, pp. 17–23.

THE STRONG FAMILY
by Charles Philips, 1732
(*Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Robert Lehman, 1944.*)

Figure 4.—A very large carpet, thickly fringed at either end, adds to the atmosphere of comfort and sociability that surrounds this English family, captured by the artist in the midst of their card games and tea preparations.

although they may have been used to cover furniture rather than the floor at that early date. The Turkey carpets described as "large" in the previously cited inventories presumably had similar dimensions, that is, under 12 feet.

The pictures of the period provide further proof that the proportions of Oriental carpets were ample. "Large" or "very large" carpets of the size and type seen in the Lee portrait appear in a number of the English group or conversation-piece pictures of the period (see the Chronological List of Pictures, p. 61). These paintings also give us a good idea of the customary use and placement of Turkey as well as other kinds of carpets in domestic settings. The carpet is usually shown in the center of the room surrounded by a border of polished wood flooring. The furniture is set against the walls and only the pieces in use, such as chairs and a tea or card table, are placed on the carpet, usually well toward if not actually at its center or in line with the fireplace.

Occasionally, the carpet might be moved toward one side of the room if the social activities of the day included dancing or some similar frolic (fig. 5). Or the carpet might be removed completely. During a visit to Baltimore in 1785, a young Englishman, Robert Hunter, reported of one social gathering he attended: "After tea the carpet was taken up, and we danced away to some charming music till eleven o'clock . . . [when] we retired to supper, and went home in our wagon at twelve."[19]

The paintings also reveal that Turkey carpets were used in the principal rooms of the house where they provided a background of color and comfort against which activities such as tea drinking, card playing, and conversation were enjoyed by polite society in the 18th century. The household inventories already mentioned provide further proof that Turkey carpets were usually to be found in the principal rooms. In the Jackson household, the Turkey carpets were located in the "Front Room" and in the Winslow residence in the "Front Chamber" upstairs as well as downstairs, while Aaron Burr had covered the floor of his drawing room with "1 Elegant Turkey Carpet & 2 recess pieces." Furthermore, the Franklins had obtained a Turkey carpet for their dining parlor. The description of the Boston house of Mr. Boylston that appears in the diary of a rising New England lawyer, John Adams, reveals how elegant the settings could be in which Oriental carpets were to be found in 18th-century America. It also indicates that carpet owners were proud of their possessions and had taste as well as wealth and social status. Of his visit to Mr. Boylston's Boston house on January 16, 1766, the future President of the United States wrote:

> Dined at Mr. Nick Boylstones, with the two Mr. Boylstones, two Mr. Smiths, Mr. Hallowel and the Ladies. An elegant Dinner indeed! Went over the House to view the Furniture, which alone cost a thousand Pounds sterling. A Seat it is for a noble Man, a Prince. The Turkey Carpets, the painted Hangings, the Marble Tables, the rich Beds with crimson Damask Curtains and Counterpins, the beautiful Chimny Clock, the Spacious Garden, are the most magnificent of any Thing I have ever seen.[20]

Oriental carpets, which at the beginning of the 18th century were customarily spread on tables and other pieces of furniture, had by the second half of the century become established as an underfoot furnishing.

FLOORCLOTH

Floorcloths were simply canvas or some other sturdy cloth material covered with several coats of paint for durability. When the smooth hard surface was ornamented with a design, as often was the case, a floorcloth was as decorative as any carpet.

In colonial houses floorcloths were used as floor coverings somewhat earlier than Oriental carpets. In the early 18th century when Turkey carpets were being laid on the tops of tables, floorcloths already were being spread underneath. When William Burnet, governor first of New York and New Jersey and then of Massachusetts, died in 1729, he is reported to have had "two old checquered canvases to lay under a table" and "a large painted canvas square as the room."[21] This was the same year Smibert painted Bishop Berkeley and his entourage grouped about a table covered with a Turkey carpet (fig. 10). Floorcloths also were used in the South at about the same date by the wealthy Virginia landowner Robert "King" Carter of "Corotoman." "1 large Floor oyl" was listed among the contents of the "Dining Room Clossett" in the "Old house" and "1 large oyle cloth to lay under a Table" was listed among the contents of the "Brick House Loft" in the inventory of Carter's home plantation in Lancaster County taken after his death in 1732.[22] Painted canvas and oilcloth were but two of the many synonyms for a floorcloth, variously referred to as canvas carpets, canvas floorcloths, fancy pattern cloths for the floor, oil floorcloths, painted floorcloths, painted-duck floorcloths, painted carpets, and painted canvas.

Floorcloths were both imported and made in this country. "Painted floor cloths" were among the items "Just Imported" offered for sale in the *Virginia Gazette* of July 25, 1766. And they continued to be imported. Some 33 years later an advertisement in

[19] *Quebec to Carolina in 1785–1786, Being the Travel Diary and Observations of Robert Hunter, Jr., a Young Merchant of London*, edit. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling (San Marino, Calif.: The Huntington Library, 1943), p. 185.

[20] *Diary of John Adams*. In *The Adams Papers*, edit. L. H. Butterfield (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1961), vol. 1, p. 294.

[21] R. T. H. Halsey and Charles O. Cornelius, *A Handbook of the American Wing* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1924), p. 132.

[22] An Inventory of all the S—— and personal property of the Hon'ble Robert Carter of the county Lancaster Esq., Deceased, taken as directed in his last will. In "Carter Papers," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (October 1898 and January 1899), vol. 6, pp. 145 and 262.

A Family Group
English, about 1740
(*Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg.*)

Figure 5.—The rich pattern of the large Oriental carpet seen in this informal study of a dancing couple is emphasized by the surrounding bare wood floor. Dancing and music were as much a part of sociability in both England and the colonies as were tea drinking and card playing.

the *New-York Gazette* of May 22, 1799, included in a list of imported carpets and carpeting "a variety of Patent Oil Floor Cloths for rooms, 1–2 yd. 3–4 and 4–4 do. for Entries." [23] Besides being imported by merchants for sale, floorcloths were imported by individuals for their own use. Residents of Virginia, because they sold their tobacco and consequently established credit in the British Isles, usually "shopped" in the British Isles by way of letters to friends and agents there. Martha Jacquelin writing to her agents in London on August 14, 1769, requested "some necessaries for House keeping" as well as items for sale in the colony to be sent "by the first Ship for York River," Virginia. Included in the list were "1 painted duck Floor Cloth" as well as "2 Kilmarnock

[23] This and most other New York newspaper references have been taken from Rita Susswein Gottesman, *The Arts and Crafts in New York, 1726–1776* (New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1938), and *The Arts and Crafts in New York, 1777–1799* (New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1954).

Carpets, 1 large & 1 small."[24] Such transatlantic shopping was accompanied by both delights and disappointments as revealed in feelings expressed by Thomas Nelson, Jr., of Virginia, in a letter dated August 7, 1773, addressed to Messrs. John Norton and Son, in London.

> Gentlemen. Capt. Robertson delivered your Letter of the 29th May enclosing a Bill of Loading for the floor Cloth and Anchovies. The Cloth is injur'd by being role'd before the paint was dry; the Anchovies are very fine, for which Mrs. Nelson returns you her particular thanks.[25]

Foresight, clearly, was needed when shopping by mail. Both Charles Carroll, barrister, and his wife were well aware of this. Their order for floorcloths was accompanied by the following packing suggestions in a letter written by the barrister on February 24, 1767, and addressed to Mr. William Anderson, a London merchant. "My wife would have some slight woolen Rolled up with the floor Cloths to Prevent their Rubbing so as to be Defaced by Getting the Paint off, if any Danger without it." In addition to taking this precautionary measure, Carroll sent explicit directions with his order for floorcloths about what he desired in durability as well as dimensions:

> 2 Good Painted floor Cloths, one of them to be 18 feet Long by 16 feet wide the other 16 feet wide by 12 feet Long, both made of the best and strongest Duck and Painted so as to bear mopping over with a wet mop and Put up Dry and so as not to be Cracked or to have the Paint Rubbed of[f].[26]

Most of the floorcloths made in this country were the work of professionals who combined the business of carpet painting with that of coach, house, and sign painting, and the sale of paints and supplies. Upholsterers and paperhangers also manufactured and sold floorcloths. Indentured apprentices were employed in this craft as is shown in a notice that appeared in the Annapolis *Maryland Gazette* of June 26, 1760: "Run away from the Subscriber, a convict servant man named John Winters, a very compleat House Painter; he can imitate marble or mahogany very exactly, and can paint Floor Cloths as neat as any imported from Britain."

A young man "compleatly bred to the different Branches of Painting and Gilding" was engaged by the proprietor of a paint shop in "Baltimore-Town," according to an advertisement in the *Maryland Gazette* of August 2, 1764. Whether he was also an indentured servant is uncertain. In any case, by securing the young painter the paint-shop proprietor was able to offer for sale "all Sorts of painted Oil Cloths for Rooms Passages, and Stairs, of various Sizes and Patterns." The manufacture and sale of floorcloths in Boston was carried on in conjunction with the sale of paints and related items. In the *Boston News-Letter* of 1767, competing craftsmen John Gore and Thomas Craft, Jr., advertised on May 7 and 21, respectively, the one offering a variety of paints and supplies at his shop at the "Sign of the PAINTER'S-ARMS" as well as "Coach & Carpet Painting done in the best and cheapest Manner" while the other at his shop near the "Liberty Tree" was offering "Painter's Oyl and Colours, also Carpet and all Sorts of Painting." By a notice on October 13, 1768, in the same newspaper, John Gore reminded Bostonians that they could have "Coach and carpet painting done in the best and Cheapest manner" at his shop or, as his advertisement on December 21 of the following year stated, "in the best and neatest Manner." In the same advertisement Mr. Gore announced that he had some Wilton carpets for sale, an indication of the growing interest and business in underfoot furnishings in the colonies. George Killcup, Jr., also used the *Boston News-Letter* to call attention to his floorcloths with an advertisement on March 17, 1768, informing "the Gentlemen and Ladies in Town and Country, That he Paints Carpets & other Articles, and Papers Rooms in the neatest Manner."

In Charleston, South Carolina, as in the other large coastal ports, houseowners and homemakers were encouraged to patronize local artisans when purchasing floorcloths. On May 10, 1768, the following advertisement appeared in the Charleston *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal:*

> WAYNE & RUGER, Painters & Glaziers, Take this Method of informing the Public, that they have opened a Shop on the Bay . . . where they carry on the House and Ship-Painting Business, in all its Branches; Signs

[24] Letter to Mr. John Norton, London, from Martha Jacquelin, York, Va., Aug. 14, 1769. In *John Norton and Sons, Merchants of London and Virginia, Being the Papers from Their Counting House for the Years 1750 to 1795*, edit. Frances Norton Mason (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1937), p. 103.

[25] Letter to Messrs. John Norton and Son, London, from Thomas Nelson, Jr., Virginia, Aug. 7, 1773. Ibid., pp. 348–49.

[26] Letter from and enclosed invoice of goods ordered by Charles Carroll, barrister, Annapolis, to Mr. William Anderson, London, Feb. 24 and Mar. 26, 1767. In "Letters of Charles Carroll, Barrister," op. cit. (footnote 14), (March 1942), vol. 37, pp. 60–61.

and Floor Cloths, painted as neat as any from London, Gilding, Japanning, Glazing, etc., etc.

And no doubt, the floorcloths made in the colonies were as "neat" and stylish as any of the imported ones. After the American Revolution, as before, the manufacture and sale of floorcloths continued to be carried on in conjunction with the painting and glazing trades. According to an advertisement in the Baltimore *Maryland Journal* of April 13, 1792, Hugh Barkley and Patrick O'Meara did painting and glazing "together with many other Things relating to the Decorations of elegant Rooms—such as Fancy Pattern-Cloths for Floors and Passages."

On occasion, floorcloths also were obtained at public auctions of household goods. A "worsted carpet, and painted floor-cloth" were among the items offered at an auction sale advertised in the *Boston News-Letter* of April 28, 1768, and "a Scotch carpet, and Painted Canvass Floor-Cloths" were listed in a notice of a public vendue that appeared in the November 11, 1773, issue of the same paper. The instances of floorcloths included in such sales were few, however, in contrast to the number of advertisements for new floorcloths of either domestic or foreign origin.

The account and daybooks covering the years from about 1762 to 1802 of the Boston firm of Daniel Rea and Son and its predecessor, the partnership of Rea and Johnston, reveal, however, that not all of the floorcloths decorated by these painters were new. In a number of instances, both before and after the American Revolution, the entries in the daybooks "To Painting your Floor Cloth" suggest that some customers had their worn or used floorcloths repainted. The durability of painted canvas floor coverings is confirmed by orders such as those on November 30, 1787, "To Painting an Old Floor Cloath" and on March 31, 1796, "to a Second hand Floor Cloath Painted for Your Entry." In fact, one customer planned to get double the wear from his purchase. An order dated September 20, 1788, reads: "To painting a Floor Cloath both Sides." [27]

Both written and pictorial sources reveal that the appearance of some floorcloths was perfectly plain, while some were ornamented with a border or figures, and others were covered with an allover pattern. A painted floorcloth, the property of a York County, Virginia, resident in 1769, referred to simply as "red" was probably plain.[28] Presumably, the "painted Green" ones that Thomas Jefferson used in the White House during his residence were also plain. In the "Small Dining Room—S[outh] front" of the White House was "a canvas floor cloth, painted Green" according to Jefferson's inventory taken in 1809. And in "The Great Hall of entrance" it was noted, "the whole floor covered with Canvass painted Green." These were not the first floorcloths in the White House. When President and Mrs. John Adams vacated the Executive Mansion there was "1 Painted Cloth floor, not in use," stored in a basement room, according to the inventory taken February 26, 1801, of "the Furniture in the President's House, the property of the United States." [29]

Both plain and figured floorcloths were painted for Bostonians by the Reas and by Johnston, according to these painters' accounts and daybooks. For instance, there are orders on September 7, 1791, for "Painting a Floor Cloath Plain Yellow" and on August 5, 1794, for "Painting a Floor Cloath Olive Colour with Border and Center piece Corners &c." Besides painting plain floorcloths and ones with "Borders, Center & Corner pieces," these Boston decorators were able to offer to their customers, or to comply with the requests for, both simple and elaborate patterns. An entry in the daybooks for September 3, 1771, reads: "To Paintg. 4 yds of Canvas, Turkey Fatchion . . . To do. yds. Stair Case & Entry." Other listings for patterned floorcloths include one on October 14, 1791, "To painting a Room and Entry Floor Cloath in Straw Work & Borders," another on November 30, 1792, "To Painting a Floor Cloath for your Parlour in Cubes" and on April 12, 1794, "To Painting a Floor Cloath Yellow & Black Diamonds Border &c." Among the

[27] Account Books of Daniel Rea and Son, of Boston. (MS, Baker Library, Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration; seen on microfilm, Downs Library, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Del.); see also MABEL M. SWAN, "The Johnstons and The Reas—Japanners," *Antiques* (May 1943), vol. 43, pp. 211–13.

[28] HELEN COMSTOCK, "Eighteenth-Century Floorcloths," *Antiques* (January 1955), vol. 67, p. 49.

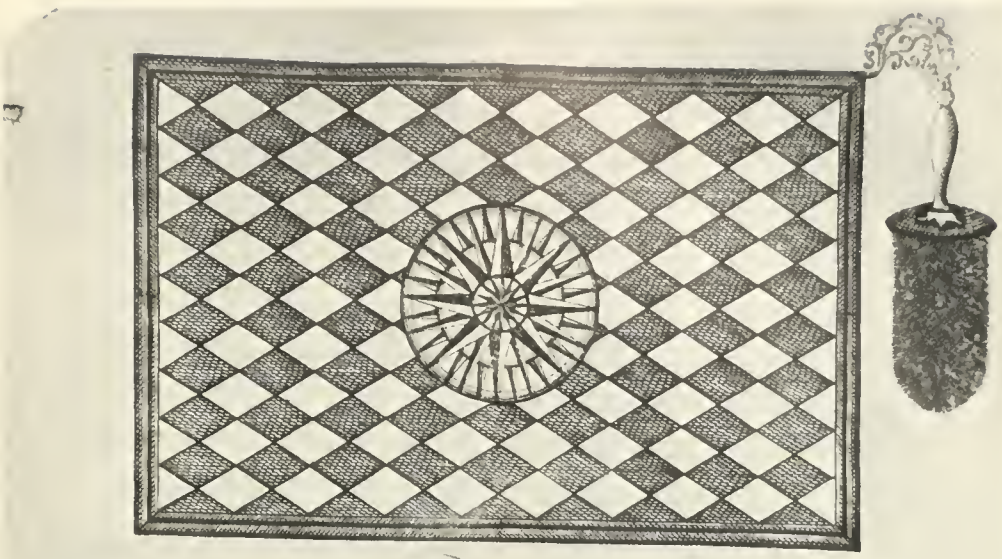
[29] Inventory of Furnishings of President's House, Feb. 18, 1809. (MS, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division.) Thomas Jefferson Papers, 1809. Reprinted in MARIE G. KIMBALL, "The Original Furnishings of the White House, Part I," *Antiques* (June 1929), vol. 15, pp. 485–86; Inventory of the Furniture in the President's House, the property of the United States, taken February 26th, 1801. In MARGARET BROWN KLAPTHOR, "A First Lady and a New Frontier, 1800," *Historic Preservation* (1963), vol. 15, pp. 90–93.

Figure 6.—Detail of a floorcloth. This painted-canvas floor covering, which measures 40 by 108 inches, is decorated with yellow and brown lozenges. (*Courtesy of Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.*)

more picturesque and decorative of the floorcloths made by Daniel Rea and Son were those described in the daybooks on October 28, 1788. "To Painting a Room and Entry Floor Cloath 35 yds. @ 2/8 with a Poosey-Cat on One Cloath and a Leetel Spannil on ye. Other Frenchman Like [£]4.13.4." Related to these floor coverings is the one listed in May 1793. Under the heading "Memo. of Floor Cloaths, where they are and how to be done," appears the notation for a floorcloth in "Mr. Barys's Barn to be painted a Border, Corner Posey & Dogg in the Center." [30]

Geometric shapes such as squares, octagons, and diamonds form one category of allover design favored in the 18th century (fig. 6). A single shape or a combination of shapes might be repeated over the entire surface of the floorcloth. With the application of color an endless number of patterns was possible. A design of squares could be transformed into a "checquered" pattern by the simple device of alternating the colors of the shapes. In much the same way, cubes, pyramids, and other three-dimensional effects might be created for underfoot use. Variety also could be achieved by the addition of a single figure or device to a standard geometric repeat pattern. For example, a floorcloth of striking appearance was created by Alexander Wetherstone from an otherwise ordinary diamond design by placing a compass-like star exactly in the center (fig. 7). Some of the allover designs made up of geometric shapes were essentially imaginary creations. Others were closely akin to marble and tile floors; and copies on canvas of such flooring provided a similar appearance and served a like purpose, but at considerably less cost. Mrs. Anne Grant suggests that this was the case in Colonel and Mrs. Schuyler's New York house, the "Flats," because she recalled in her reminiscences of pre-Revolutionary America that "the lobby had oilcloth painted in

[30] For an 18th-century English pile carpet with a "Leetel" dog "in the Center," see Thompson, op. cit. (footnote 1), fig. 15, p. 213.



Alex.r Wetherstone

CARPENTER JOYNER and TURNER,

at y.e Painted Floor Cloth & Brush in Portugal Street,

Near Lincolns Inn Back Gate.

Sells all Sorts of Floor Cloths, Hair Cloths, List Carpets, Royal & other Matting, Mahogany Cisterns with Brass hoops, Dish & other Stands, Voiders, hand boards, Tea Boards, Tea Trays, Tea Chests, Back Gammon Tables & Draught Boards, Child Bed China Plate & other Baskets, Cradles & Chairs, Cruit frames, & all Sorts of Lignum Vitæ & Tunbridge Wares, Mops, Brooms, Brushes, Sieves, Hampers, Bellows, Wood Platters, Bouls, Pails, Washing Tubbs, Coal & Corn Measures, Sponge, Iron and Tin Coal Scoops, Tind Scuttles &c Horses for Cloths, Fire Skreens, Plate Racks, Umbrellas, Cotton & Wool for Quilting, Hair Lines, Cords, pack Thread, Black Balls & Turnery Wares of all Sorts, Likewise English & Dutch Toys, wholesale and Retail at the most Reasonable Rates.

Figure 7.—Trade card of Alexander Wetherstone, English, about 1760. The floor coverings sold by Wetherstone were haircloths, list carpets, and matting as well as floor-cloths. (*Courtesy of The British Museum, Sir Ambrose Heal Collection.*)

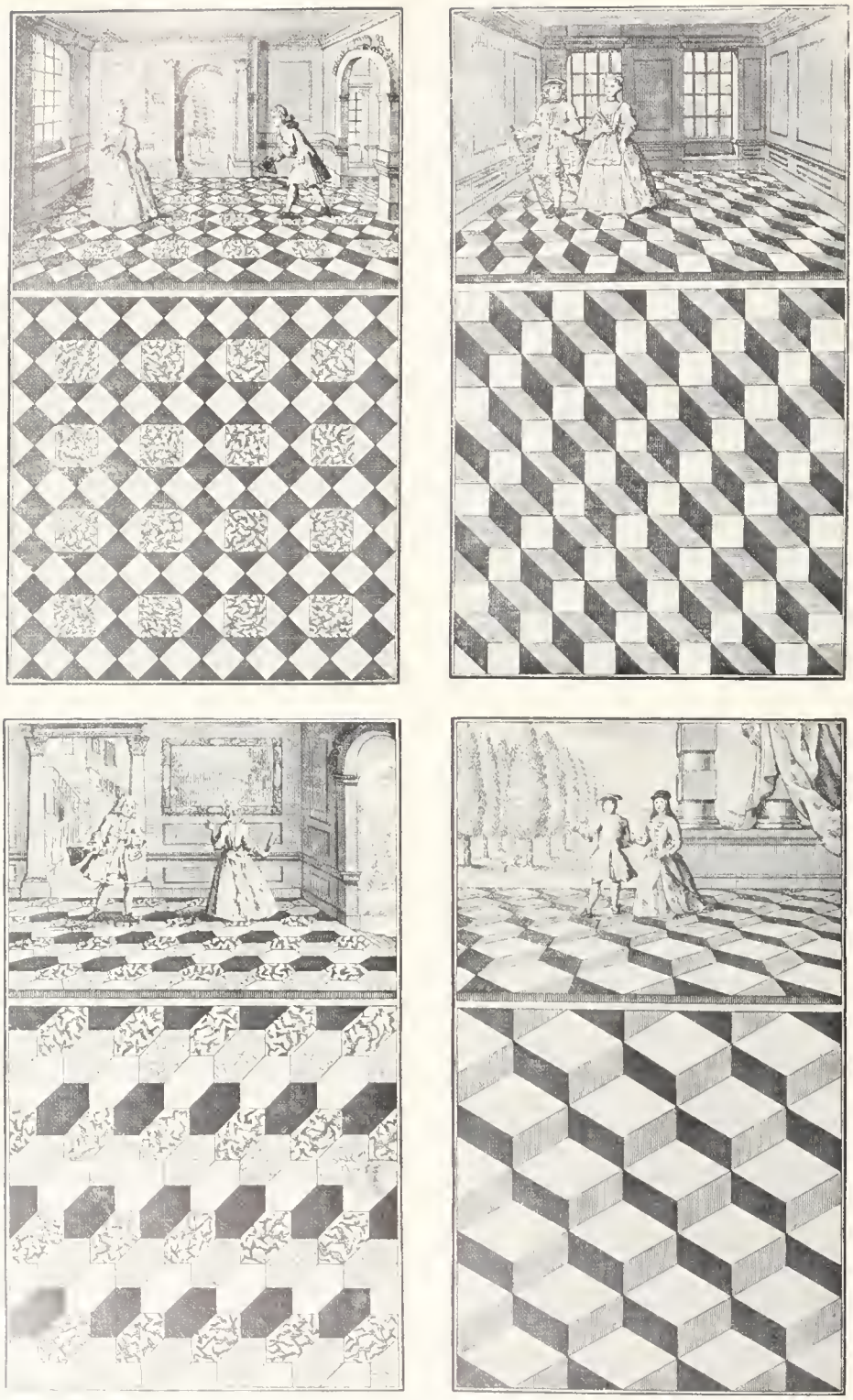


Figure 8.—*Floor-Decorations of Various Kinds . . . Adapted to the Ornamenting of Halls, Rooms, Summer-houses, &c. . . .* Designed and engraved by John Carwitham, London, 1739, plates 4, 6, 8, and 11. (*Courtesy of Library of Congress.*)

lozenges, to imitate blue and white marble." [31]

One source that provides some idea of what these floorcloths looked like is patterned marble flooring dating from the 18th century. Another source and one that may well have been used by floorcloth painters is an English book of designs for floors. Inscribed on each of the design plates is "I. Carwitham Inv[entor] et sc[ulptor] 1739." There is no text aside from the following self-explanatory title page:

> Floor-Decorations of Various Kinds, Both in Plano & Perspective Adapted to the Ornamenting of Halls, Rooms, Summer-houses &c. in XXIV Copper Plates. A Work intirely new, & as Serviceable to Gentlemen & Workmen by the Perspective-Views in ye. several Head-pieces as entertaining to the Ladies in Colouring them.
>
> Designed, Engraved & Published, according to Act of Parliament, by Jno. Carwitham Sold by R. Caldwell at Mercers-Hall Cheapside & at his House in King Street. Humbly Inscribed to the Rt. Honble. the Ld. Darnley, Grand Master of ye. Ancient & Honourable Society of Free and accepted Masons.
>
> all sorts of Water Colours, Black-lead Pencils, Indian Ink, &c. Sold.

Although floorcloths are not mentioned in the above title page, a specific reference to the suitability of such designs for them appears in another copy of the book. This edition has the same plates but a different title page:

> Various kinds of FLOOR DECORATIONS represented both in Plano and Perspective Being useful Designs for Ornamenting the Floors of Halls Rooms, Summer Houses, &c. whither in Pavements of Stone, or Marble, or wth. Painted Floor Cloths, in Twenty four Copper Plates.
>
> Design'd and Engrav'd by John Carwitham, London. Printed for John Bowles at the Black Horse in Cornhill.[32]

The 24 designs offered by John Carwitham and depicted in such settings as outside terraces, paneled rooms, and entrance halls range from simple patterns of squares to intricate compositions involving a variety of shapes and textures (fig. 8). Any one of the designs could have been transferred to a floorcloth

CHILD WITH DOG
American, about 1800
(Courtesy of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection, Williamsburg.)

Figure 9.—The cubed pattern surrounded by a border of vines which covers the floor in this portrait reveals the artist's skill at simulating marble.

by "carpet painting done in the best and neatest manner." A comparison of one of Carwitham's designs with the cube pattern depicted in the American portrait *Child with Dog* (fig. 9), painted about 1800, suggests that such copying was done. Whether such floors were actually copied from Carwitham's book, a marble floor, or some other source is unknown, but it is apparent that floorcloths or painted floors did in fact resemble marble flooring.

Another type of flooring reproduced on canvas was that made of tiles. Mrs. John Adams, describing

[31] ANNE GRANT, *Memoirs of an American Lady, with Sketches of Manners and Scenery in America, as They Existed Previous to the Revolution* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1846), p. 86.

[32] The edition published by Carwitham, of which the Library of Congress possesses a copy, differs only in the wording on the title page from the one printed for John Bowles, of which the copy owned by Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., is reproduced in COMSTOCK, op. cit. (footnote 28), p. 48.

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GEORGE BERKELEY, BISHOP OF CLOYNE, AND HIS WIFE AND FAMILY
by John Smibert, 1729
(*Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland.*)

Figure 10.—The table covered with a Turkey carpet seen in this group portrait—a record of an English family's sojourn in Newport, Rhode Island—suggests that such usage was both appropriate and fashionable in this period.

the house she and her ambassador husband were renting at Auteuil, near Paris, wrote to her sister in Massachusetts on September 5, 1784, that there was not "a carpet belonging to the house. The floors I abhor, made of red tiles in the shape of Mrs. Quincy's floorcloth tiles."[33] On the same day in a letter to her niece, Mrs. Adams again explained that the room in which she was writing "wants only the addition of a carpet to give it all an air of elegance; but in lieu of this is a tile floor in the shape of Mrs. Quincy's carpet."[34] Since the tile floors would "by no means bear water" but had to be dusted and waxed, and repainted when defaced, it seems unlikely that they

[33] Letter from Mrs. Abigail Adams, Auteuil, France, to Mrs. Mary Cranch, Braintree, Mass., Sept. 5, 1784. In *The Letters of Mrs. Adams, The Wife of John Adams*, edit. Charles Francis Adams (4th ed.; Boston: Wilkins, Carter, and Co., 1848), p. 189.

[34] Letter from Mrs. Abigail Adams, Auteuil, France, to Miss Elizabeth Cranch, Braintree, Mass., Sept. 5, 1784. Ibid., pp. 194–95.

JOHN PHILLIPS
by Joseph Steward, 1793
(*Courtesy of Dartmouth College, photo courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago.*)

Figure 11.—Floral-patterned surfaces characterize the wall-to-wall floor coverings of these two rooms. They are in shades of russet, olive-green, and yellow.

were of marble. Neither were they of wood nor of "small stones, like the red tiles for size and shape," the two other types of flooring which Mrs. Adams makes note of in the letters. In all probability, the tiles were some type of ceramic material and their shape, which had prompted the comparison with Mrs. Quincy's floorcloth, may have been hexagonal, square, or diamond. Whatever the material and appearance of the floors, it is interesting to note the unique method of cleaning them described by Mrs. Adams. In the letters to her sister and niece cited above, she explained that the floors were waxed and "then a man-servant with foot brushes [i.e., brushes upon which he set his feet] drives round your room dancing here and there like a Merry Andrew. This is calculated to take from your foot every atom of dirt, and leave the room in a few moments as he found it." Mrs. Adams also wrote that this man who "with his arms akimbo . . . goes driving round your room . . . is called a *frotteur*, and is a servant kept on purpose for the business."

Carpeting, too, was imitated, as the reference to a floorcloth painted in the Turkey fashion, already cited, indicates. Wilton carpeting was another type of pile floor covering copied on canvas carpets, because "Wilton or Marble Cloths" for floors were advertised in the *Boston Gazette* of January 26, 1761. Since the resiliency, warmth, and sound absorption inherent in pile carpets could not be reproduced in a floorcloth, it is unlikely that Turkey or Wilton floorcloths were ever intended to deceive the eye and foot, as was most surely the case with "Marble Cloths." Instead, floorcloths were presumably so designated because the designs painted on them resembled those of the pile carpets. It is uncertain whether the floor covering seen in the portrait *Chief Justice and Mrs. Oliver Ellsworth* (fig. 1), painted in 1792 by Ralph Earl, was a woven or embroidered

Boy with Finch
attributed to John Brewster, Jr., about 1800
(*Courtesy of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection, Williamsburg.*)

Figure 12.—The floor area in this portrait is decorated with a diaper design of blue, orange, and yellow on a brown background.

carpet, or an imitation of one. There can be little doubt, however, that the bold pattern of stripes and medallions rendered in strong shades of black, red, orange, and white was striking. The alternating wide and narrow stripes on a black background are surrounded by a broad border of the same red circles that are dotted diagonally across the horizontal red lines of the wide stripes and between the medallions. The latter are white, crossed with orange strokes, and enclose red and—in alternate rows—black circular centers.

A similar floor covering with a large-scale pattern of medallion-filled stripes and a vivid color scheme of white, red, greenish black, and orange appears in another portrait painted in 1798 by Ralph Earl, *Mrs. Noah Smith and Her Children.* It is of course possible that the decorated floors in these or any of the other pictures illustrated were imaginary creations of the artists rather than actual belongings of the persons portrayed. Certainly, the underfoot furnishings depicted in the portraits of Connecticut citizens done by Ralph Earl bear a marked resemblance, one to the other, which would seem to suggest a common source. On the one hand, this may have been a local craftsman or floorcloth manufactory or, on the other hand, the portrait painter's imagination. Even allowing for artistic license, however, it seems most likely that the floor coverings which appear in 18th-century pictures were based on actual examples which the artist may have seen under the feet of the people portrayed or in shops or elsewhere.

While some carpet painters provided imitation carpeting on canvas, others, like the already mentioned John Gore of Boston, preferred to sell the actual carpeting and to continue the manufacture of floorcloths, presumably of their own design. The two painted carpets owned by John Phillips (fig. 11), that are so carefully delineated in his portrait painted in 1793 by Joseph Steward, reveal how successful were some of the creations of these 18th-century craftsmen. Floral rather than geometric motifs characterize the allover designs on these two floorcloths. Flowers—ranging from simple stylized blossoms of four petals to complex conventionalized roses—have been marshaled into an orderly arrangement of squares. No doubt both of Mr. Phillips' floorcloths were as practical as they were pleasing because allover repeat patterns, particularly of this scale, tend to camouflage soil and wear. The choice of colors, too, seems to have been utilitarian as well as decorative, for the background is brown and the motifs are olive green, yellow, and russet. Another example of allover repeat patterns based on floral motifs that were either stenciled or painted on floorcloths or floors is shown in the portrait *Boy with Finch* (fig. 12), painted about 1800. Again floral forms have been treated in a two-dimensional and essentially nonrepresentational manner, and colors have been used that are both pleasing and practical. Against a brown background, multipetaled flowers of blue with centers of yellow are enclosed by orange- and yellow-leaf vines forming a diamond design.

NATHAN HAWLEY, AND FAMILY
by William Wilkie, 1801
(*Courtesy of Albany Institute of History and Art.*)

Figure 13.—The floor of the first room illustrated in this watercolor is partly covered with a painted-canvas carpet which has a cream background with blue and tan motifs, while the floor of the other room, as seen through the doorway, is bare.

Although the canvas carpet seen in the watercolor portrait *Nathan Hawley, and Family*, dated November 3, 1801 (fig. 13), differs in scale and color from the floorcloths just mentioned, the total effect is, nevertheless, still one of regularly arranged floral motifs. The pattern is formed of large squares with leaf sprays at the crossing superimposed on flower-filled diamonds. It emphasizes rather than obscures the floral theme, since each flower is tidily enclosed in a diamond which in turn is neatly enclosed in a square. The colors of this carefully worked out arrangement are blue and brown on a cream ground.

Designs also might be created by homemakers themselves and then be reproduced by professional floorcloth painters. In reference to their future house and its furnishings, David Spear, Jr., wrote from Boston early in 1787 to his fiancée, Miss Marcy Higgins, in Eastham: "My Father means to afford us a painted Carpet for the Room and likes our plan in the Figure we proposed having if the Painters can do it, and they approve of it also."[35]

The season as well as the design, however, was a

[35] Letter from David Spear, Jr., Boston, to Miss Marcy Higgins, Eastham, Mass., 1787. In ROBERT BARTLETT HAAS, "The Forgotten Courtship of David and Marcy Spear, 1785–1787," *Old Time New England* (January-March 1962), vol. 52, p. 69.

factor to be taken into consideration when ordering a floorcloth. In his letter to Marcy on February 1, David wrote: "The Carpet cannot be painted in the Winter Season, but in the Spring I hope to have it done."[36] Hopefully the young couple did not have to wait too long after their April wedding for the floorcloth with which their first parlor was furnished.

Besides creating their own designs, some homemakers went a step further and applied them to floorcloths they had manufactured themselves. This was what Lyman Beecher's bride had done. Recalling for his children something of family life in East Hampton, Long Island, around 1800, Lyman Beecher related the following incident:

> We had no carpets; there was not a carpet from end to end of the town. All had sanded floors, some of them worn through. Your mother introduced the first carpet. Uncle Lot gave me some money, and I had an itch to spend it. Went to a vendue, and bought a bale of cotton. She spun it, and had it woven; then she laid it down, sized it, and painted it in oils, with a border all around it, and bunches of roses and other flowers over the centre. She sent to New York for her colors, and ground and mixed them herself. The carpet was nailed down on the garret floor, and she used to go up there and paint.[37]

The fact that floorcloths do appear in portraits suggests that they were by no means regarded as an inferior or humble type of underfoot furnishing. On the contrary, a pride of ownership is implied. The owners of the floorcloths were often prominent persons; floorcloths were used by a colonial governor, William Burnet, by one of the wealthiest of Virginia gentlemen, Robert "King" Carter, and by a President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson. The Ellsworths, outstanding residents of Connecticut whose portrait by Earl was referred to in a preceding paragraph, might be included in this list too. Mr. Ellsworth was a lawyer, delegate to the Continental Congress, participant in the Constitutional Convention, and, at the time the portrait (fig. 1) was painted, a United States Senator. He later became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. John Phillips is another person of importance who used floorcloths. After acquiring great wealth and holding several public offices, he turned to philanthropy, giving substantial gifts to Dartmouth College, being instrumental in the founding of Phillips Academy, Andover, and establishing Phillips Exeter Academy. When his portrait (fig. 11) was painted for Dartmouth College in 1793, Phillips was shown in a domestic setting complete with canvas carpets. That such persons owned and were sometimes portrayed with floorcloths is evidence that, as symbols of affluence and status, floorcloths were as acceptable as other types of underfoot furnishings.

Inventories appear to verify this, for among those studied from Suffolk County, Massachusetts, few in proportion to the total number recorded in any one year list floorcloths. Thus, floor coverings including floorcloths were owned by only a small segment of the total population and were a status symbol because of their limited ownership. If only inventories with entries for underfoot furnishings are considered, however, floorcloths appear more often than other types of floor coverings. In other words, although floorcloths were a fairly common type of underfoot furnishing, they were a rather uncommon item of household furnishing in 18th-century America. For example, out of some 75 inventories recorded in 1758, 3 were found in which underfoot furnishings were mentioned. Of these three, one, the Jackson inventory of 1758, listed "2 Turk & 2 homspn. Carpets," while the other two listed floorcloths. The inventory of Mr. Thomas Pain included an entry for "1 floor Cloth."[38] Mrs. Hannah Pemberton's inventory revealed that this Boston widow had "a painted floor Cloth 9/" in the parlor as well as "a floor Cloth 40/" in the great room.[39] A similar pattern of ownership emerges from inventories registered two decades later. Among the more than 100 inventories recorded in 1778, only 4 listed floor coverings, and of these only 2 had entries for floorcloths. One, that of Thomas Leverett of Boston, listed "1 floor Cloth 12/" as well as "2 large floor Carpets £6."[40] The other inventory was Joshua Winslow's, already mentioned in connection

[36] Letter from David Spear, Jr., Boston, to Miss Marcy Higgins, Eastham, Mass., Feb. 1, 1787. Ibid., p. 71.

[37] *The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher*, edit. Barbara M. Cross (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1961), vol. 1, p. 86; for directions for making floorcloths, see NINA FLETCHER LITTLE, *American Decorative Wall Painting, 1700–1850* (Sturbridge, Mass.: Old Sturbridge Village, 1952), pp. 76–77.

[38] Inventory of Thomas Pain, May 19, 1758. In Suffolk Probate Books, vol. 53, pp. 359–61.

[39] Inventory of Mrs. Hannah Pemberton, June 22, 1758. Ibid., vol. 53, pp. 445–47.

[40] Inventory of Thomas Leverett, May 22, 1778. Ibid., vol. 77, pp. 410–21.

with Turkey carpets. Besides the Turkey carpets in both the downstairs and upstairs front chambers and a "Scotch carpet 8," in the upstairs back chamber, there were two floorcloths recorded in the inventory. In the back parlor was "1 Canvas floor Cloth," probably valued at 14 shillings, and in the "Entry and Stair Case" a "painted floor Cloth 12/" along with an unidentified carpet. Approximately the same relationship of floorcloths to other types of coverings for floors appears again in the inventories for 1777, when 9 out of about 75 inventories had entries for underfoot furnishings of which 4 included floorcloths. These inventories also indicate, as do those already cited, that floorcloths might be but one type in a variety of movable floor coverings used in a household.

Of the four Boston inventories of 1777 in which floorcloths were mentioned, that of Samuel Emmes listed a "Floor Cloth 12/" and "3 painted floor Cloths 9/" as well as "2 small Carpets 4/." [41] The other three inventories also showed at least one other type of floor covering besides canvas carpets. "2 Carpetts 30/" and "1 floor Cloth 4/" were listed in the inventory of Captain Benjamin Homer.[42] "Two Wilton Carpets £80" and "two painted Carpets £14 one Do. £6 two ditto £4.10/" were listed in the inventory of Dr. Joseph Warren.[43] The inventories reveal that in the case of Mr. Robert Gould, a Boston merchant, nearly every room in his residence had some type of floor covering. There were Scotch, Wilton, and unnamed carpets as well as floorcloths. In the back sitting room was "1 painted Floor Cloth old 4/." And a few rooms even had two kinds of floor coverings. In the parlor were "1 Scotts Carpet 16" alongside "1 painted Floor-Cloth 30/." This combination appeared again in the "chamber Entry" where there were "1 Floor Cloth 3" and "1 Scotch Carpet 12/" as well as "2 Strips Carpet 4/ [and] 1 Stair Carpet 18/." [44] Floorcloths were the sole type of underfoot furnishings in some households, while in others they were but one of two or more kinds of floor coverings in use. The 1776 inventory of a Boston merchant, Mr. William Whitwell, provides an example of a household in which the movable floor coverings were limited to floorcloths, namely "1 Canvas floor Cloth 6/." [45] The inventory of a Cohasset merchant, Mr. Thomas Stevenson, listed both a "Canvas Carpet 15/" and a "Woolen Carpet 16/8." [46] The inventory of William Burch, "an Absentee," recorded January 29, 1779, listed a single item of underfoot furnishing, "1 Canvas Carpet £4." [47]

Although some idea of prices can be derived from inventories, it is difficult to say whether floorcloths were less or more expensive than other types of floor coverings—or if they were on the whole comparable in value to Scotch carpets, for instance. Indeed, it is almost impossible to make such evaluations because age, size, and decoration—factors that influenced the price of floor coverings and that are necessary for comparisons—are seldom recorded. Nevertheless, floorcloths probably were available in a wider range of prices than most other types of floor coverings, since they were simply painted canvas which easily could be adjusted in quality and design to fit the consumer's purse.

Inventories, pictures, and writings of the period reveal, however, that floorcloths were used throughout the house. Floors in the major rooms as well as those in passages, entries, and stairways were covered with this type of underfoot furnishing. For example, the inventory of Mr. Joseph Blake, "late of Boston," taken in 1745 but not recorded until 1746, listed "a Painted Floor Cloth" worth £3 in the "Closett" of the front room.[48] James Pemberton's inventory, taken 2 years later, had entries for "1 painted floor Cloth 80/" in the parlor and "1 floor Cloth 200/" in the "Great Room." [49] In the Cunningham inventory of 1748, there was "1 Canvas Floor Cloth £4" in the "Great Chamber first floor." Suffolk County, Massachusetts, inventories of 1757 and 1758 show little variance with those of a decade earlier in the placement of floorcloths. In one house-

[41] Inventory of Samuel Emmes, Nov. 7, 1777. Ibid., vol. 76, pp. 504–506.

[42] Inventory of Benjamin Homer, Jan. 24, 1777. Ibid., vol. 75, pp. 393–96.

[43] Inventory of Joseph Warren, Dec. 9, 1777. Ibid., vol. 76, pp. 645–49.

[44] Inventory of Robert Gould, Mar. 14, 1777. Ibid., vol. 76, pp. 209–22.

[45] Inventory of William Whitwell, July 8, 1776. Ibid., vol. 75, pp. 539–40.

[46] Inventory of Thomas Stevenson, Dec. 2, 1776. Ibid., vol. 76, pp. 188–91.

[47] Inventory of William Burch, Jan. 29, 1779. Ibid., vol. 78, pp. 125–26.

[48] Inventory of Joseph Blake, Jan. 7, 1745 (sworn to Sept. 18, 1746). Ibid., vol. 39, pp. 184–86.

[49] Inventory of James Pemberton, Mar. 31, 1747. Ibid., vol. 39, pp. 497–505.

hold, in fact, two were still in the same place. James Pemberton's widow Hannah, according to her inventory of 1758, had left the "painted floor Cloth" in the parlor and "a floor Cloth" still covered the floor of the great room. Whether called great room, parlor, great chamber, or front room—the latter was the location of "1 Small floor Cloth 60," mentioned in the 1757 inventory of Reverend Charles Brockwell—it is clear that the rooms in which floorcloths were used were among the important ones in a house.[50]

The presence of japanned and mahogany tea tables with china tea sets, family pictures, candle sconces with arms, and a spinet as well as a couch and chairs in a room where the underfoot furnishing was a floorcloth, as was the case in the Pemberton's "Great Room," is an indication that painted-canvas cloths were held in much higher regard in the mid-18th century than is realized today. Floorcloths were hardly less esteemed in the 1770s than they had been 20 years earlier. A "Canvas Carpet 15," in the "Next front Chamber" is listed in the Stevenson inventory of 1776. The floors in the "Back Sitting Room" in Robert Gould's house and the "back parlor" of Joshua Winslow's house were each covered with floorcloths, the one with a "painted Floor Cloth old" and the other with "1 Canvas floor Cloth." According to the inventories of these two Bostonians recorded in 1777 and 1778, respectively, floorcloths also were used in the entries at both residences along with other types of floor and stair carpeting. The plain and patterned floorcloths, both new and used, painted by Daniel Rea and Son for the homemakers and householders of Boston also were used in rooms—middle rooms, front rooms, parlors, back parlors, and dining parlors—as well as entries.

Floorcloths for entries and hallways may have been of hardier construction than those used in rooms, since a differentiation was made in their use, as the newspaper advertisements already cited indicate. For example, "painted Oil Cloths" were made for passages as well as rooms, as were "Fancy Pattern-Cloths." And the "Patent Oil Floor Cloths" available for rooms also were manufactured in "1–2 yd. 3–4 and 4–4 do." sizes for entries. According to the 1797 inventory of furniture at "Richmond Hill," both the "Hall below Stairs" and the "Hall entry below Stairs" were covered with a "Patent Oil Cloth" and in the staircase there was "1 Oil Cloth (stair foot)." Stairs, too, were sometimes covered with painted canvas. The "painted Oil Cloths" just mentioned were made for stairs, and a sale of furnishings from a Baltimore residence that was announced in the *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Daily Advertiser* of June 24, 1777, included "a staircloth, with iron rods and holdfasts."

When used in the principal rooms of a house, floorcloths might cover the entire floor from wall to wall, as shown in the portraits of the Ellsworths and of Mr. Phillips (figs. 1 and 11), or a good part of the floor, as in the Hawley family portrait (fig. 13). Presumably Governor Burnet's "large painted canvas square as the room" was of similar proportions. Floorcloths also seem to have been made in all sizes because the Brockwell inventory of 1757 listed a "Small floor cloth" in the front room. The size of a "Small floor cloth" is not known, though obviously it would have to cover less floor than the large carpet depicted in the painting of the Hawley family. The placement and use of small floorcloths are, unfortunately, not known either. Another puzzle in the location and use of floorcloths is presented by the Gould inventory of 1777 which listed as part of the parlor furnishings "1 Scotts Carpet" and "1 painted Floor-Cloth." Perhaps one floor covering was laid on top of the other or placed in the center of the room, and the other one used by the fireplace or just inside the doorway to the parlor. Another possibility, and one for which there is evidence, is that the floorcloth was placed under a table at mealtime. The "two old checquered canvases to lay under a table" owned by Governor Burnet and Robert "King" Carter's "large oyle cloth to lay under a Table" are proof that floorcloths had been used in this way in the colonies since the early part of the 18th century.

This use of floorcloths also may explain why the oilcloth carpet in Carter's inventory was listed among the contents of the dining-room closet which included such things as a teapot, cups, saucers, plates, glasses, decanter, knives, backgammon table, and candlesticks; and why the painted floorcloth in Blake's inventory of 1745 was located in the closet of the front room along with such china items as plates, bowls, cups, and saucers. Perhaps the floorcloths, like the china and related paraphernalia with which they were stored, were used only at tea or mealtime.

The practice of placing a carpet under the table was still followed in the early 19th century when Thomas

[50] Inventory of Charles Brockwell, May 13, 1757. Ibid., vol. 52, pp. 327–37.

THE SARGENT FAMILY
American, about 1800

(Courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., from the Collection of American Primitive Paintings given by Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch.)

Figure 14.—The floors in these rooms are completely covered, the principal one with a large checkered pattern of brown, tan, and cream. The tan woodwork and lower portion of the wall as well as the brown-and-cream striped upholstery of the armchair repeat the color scheme of the floor covering. In the adjoining room, the floor covering has a diamond pattern in two shades of greenish blue.

Jefferson was furnishing the White House. In a letter concerning the purchase of straw carpets, to be discussed presently, Jefferson explained that he wanted a floorcloth "to lay down on the floor of a dining room when the table is set and be taken up when the table is removed, merely to secure a very handsome floor from grease and the scouring which that necessitates." The purchase of a floorcloth for the Presidential Mansion, however, was delayed for the time being because the prices of "English painted cloth" prompted Jefferson to note in the same letter that "at 3 dollars a square yard the floor cloth would cost me 100 D[ollars], which is far beyond the worth of the object." Nevertheless, one seems to have been obtained because the previously cited inventory of the "President's house" taken in 1809 lists "a canvas floor cloth, painted Green" in the small dining room, south front.

Another function of the floorcloth appears to have

been as a summer floor covering. Mrs. Abigail Adams, returning home from Philadelphia where she had been residing during her husband's term as Vice President of the United States, wrote on May 6, 1791, to her sister concerning household matters in Quincy, Massachusetts: "I think my dear Sister that as it is coming Hot weather my oil cloth will do best for my parlour. I would wish to have it put down. What would be the expence of a New Tack. If ten or 12 dollors would put one up, tis so great a comfort that I should be glad to have one put up." [51] It is not known whether the oilcloth was laid on the bare floor or over a carpet. Both oilcloth and straw matting, however, were sometimes used in the 19th century as floor covering in the summer. The fact that Mrs. Adams wished the oilcloth to be tacked in place, although not answering the question of whether on the bare floor or over a carpet, does indicate one way of laying floorcloths.

In entries or halls, as in front rooms, great chambers, and parlors, the floor might be either partially or completely covered with a floorcloth. In the entrance hall of the White House the "whole floor" was covered with a "canvas painted Green." The advertisement in the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser* of 1799, previously mentioned, listed floorcloths for entries in widths of 18, 24, and 36 inches. Such a range of sizes from small to large would have provided for either area or wall-to-wall protection depending upon the size of the entry.

Utilitarian as well as ornamental, floorcloths were highly regarded as underfoot furnishings throughout the 18th century, and their use in American houses to cover, protect, and decorate floors, based on the sources studied, was much more extensive than is recognized today.

STRAW

Straw carpets and matting also were used on household floors in 18th-century America, but very little is known about them. The use of straw and straw-like materials for covering floors, however, was not new. In the Middle Ages, loose straw, hay, and rushes were strewed on floors. Later, mats of braided rush were made.[52] In England, mats appear in paintings dating from the second half of the 16th century, and their use extended well into the 17th century, as shown in the portrait *Sir Thomas Aston at Death Bed of his First Wife*, painted in 1635 by John Souch, for the floor of the room depicted is covered with a braided rush mat. Although the use of mats in England at this time raises the possibility that they also may have been used in the colonies, a check of 17th-century inventories recorded in Essex County, Massachusetts, does not reveal any mention of floormats or matting.[53] Their use on the floor, moreover, was not included in the definition of mat as a "contexture of rushes" or "rushes plated or woven together" in Bailey's *Dictionary* until the late 1730s when a mat was defined as "rushes interwoven to lay on floors, and for various other uses."

The straw carpets and matting available in 18th-century America, then, were not closely associated with the earlier floor coverings of straw or rush. Rather, their use in the colonies seems to date from the mid-18th century. During his sojourn in this country as Commissary to the Swedish congregation on the Delaware River in the 1750s, Israel Acrelius observed: "Straw carpets have lately been introduced in the towns. But the inconvenience of this is that they must soon be cleansed from flyspots, and a multitude of vermin, which harbor in such things, and from the kitchen smoke, which is universal." [54]

Despite these disadvantages, straw carpets and matting did meet with the approval of some of the colonists. In May 1759, no less a person than George Washington, recently married to the widow Mrs. Martha Custis, ordered "50 yards of best Floor Matting" for use at Mount Vernon.[55] That the use of straw floor coverings was not limited to the Middle Atlantic Colonies and the South is proved by both

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[51] Letter from Mrs. Abigail Adams, New York, to Mrs. Mary Cranch, Braintree, Mass., May 6, 1791. In *New Letters of Abigail Adams*, edit. Stewart Mitchell (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947), p. 73.

[52] Albert Frank Kendrick, "English Carpets," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* (Jan. 24, 1919), vol. 67, pp. 136–37.

[53] *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts*, op. cit. (footnote 2), vols. 1–8, covering the years from 1636 to 1683.

[54] Israel Acrelius, *A History of New Sweden; or, The Settlements on the River Delaware*, trans. and edit. William M. Reynolds (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1874), p. 157.

[55] Invoice of goods ordered by George Washington, Williamsburg, from Robert Cary, London, May 1759. In *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Source, 1745–1799*, edit. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931–1944), vol. 2, p. 320.

inventories and newspaper advertisements. "3 floor Matts" valued at 60 shillings were listed among items located "In the Chambers" in the 1749 inventory of a Boston widow, Sarah Trecothick.[56] Mrs. Elizabeth Pecker's inventory recorded in 1757 included "a Straw matt" among the chamber furnishings.[57] And a "handsome Floor Straw Carpet" was mentioned in an auction notice which appeared in the *Boston Gazette* of January 28, 1760. The fact that straw carpets and matting were available in New England at this time coincides with their appearance elsewhere in the colonies. Thus, it seems probable that their use on this side of the Atlantic dates from the middle of the 18th century.

References to straw floor coverings later in the century include "a large matt for entry 6/" listed in the 1778 inventory of Peter Chardon, Esq., of Boston.[58] At Mount Vernon, the straw mats ordered in 1759 apparently had proved satisfactory for in July 1772 an order of goods "for the Use of George Washington, Potomack River, Virginia," included "30 yards of yard wide Floor Matt'g."[59] Since straw is among the less durable of materials for underfoot use, it is likely that the order may have been for replacing worn-out portions. Wear and tear also may have accounted for the fact that matting was ordered again in the late 1780s. In a letter dated Mount Vernon, January 15, 1789, and addressed to Robert Morris, Washington wrote: "I pray you to receive my thanks for your favor of the 5th. and for the obliging attention which you have given to the Floor matting from China. The latter is not yet arrived at the Port of Alexandria nor is the navigation of the River at this time open for the Passage of any Vessel; while, the frost has much the appearance of encreasing and continuing."[60] Floor matting seems to have been in continuous use at Mount Vernon during the second half of the 18th century on the basis of Washington's correspondence and orders for goods.

Washington's letters also reveal that the Orient was one source of supply for underfoot furnishings of straw. The correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and his assistant, Thomas Claxton, concerning the purchase of floor coverings for the White House mentions floor matting of oriental origin, too. In a letter to Jefferson, dated Philadelphia, June 13, 1802, Claxton wrote:

> Before I left the city of Washington you mentioned a floor cloth which you wished to have painted on canvas. Since I have been here, I have seen a kind of grass matting which is used by the genteelest people,—it is, in my estimation very handsome and comes cheaper even than the common painted cloths of this country. Inclosed, sir, you will have a specimen of the stuff. It is a yard and a half wide and costs 7/6 pr. yard. I believe a square yard of canvas, that is good, will cost before any paint is put on, nearly as much as a yard of this, which is yd. & ½ wide. If you should fancy it, I can procure that which is variegated in colour white and red, and by forwarding to me the plan of your floor, Sir, I can have it made immediately. The making is an exclusive charge. English painted cloth costs about 3 dollars pr. square yd and American I am told is scarcely ever used.[61]

In a postscript, Claxton added: "When these cloths are made they are strongly bound and are said to wear well." There need be no question about the origin of the matting because Jefferson's notation of Claxton's letter provides the answer. The memorandum by Jefferson, written on a piece of paper halved lengthwise, reads:

> Prices
> floor cloth, English painted canvas costs 3d[ollars]. pr. sq. yard
> the canvas itself painted costs 1d. pr. sq. yard
> Chinese straw floor cloth costs 67 cents pr. sq. yard
> See Claxton's letter[?] from Phila. June 13, 1802[62]

The matting was not purchased, however, for as Jefferson explained in his reply of June 18 to Claxton:

> The samples of straw floor cloth are beautiful, especially the finest one, but would not answer for the purpose I have in view which is to lay down on the floor of a dining

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[56] Inventory of Mrs. Sarah Trecothick, Feb. 22, 1749. In Suffolk Probate Books, vol. 43, pp. 397–400.

[57] Inventory of Mrs. Elizabeth Pecker, May 6, 1757. Ibid., vol. 52, pp. 317–19.

[58] Inventory of Peter Chardon, June 5, 1778. Ibid., vol. 77, pp. 145–49.

[59] Invoice of goods ordered by George Washington, Mount Vernon, from Robert Cary, London, July 1772. In *Writings of George Washington*, op. cit. (footnote 55), vol. 3, p. 92.

[60] Letter from George Washington, Mount Vernon, to Robert Morris, Philadelphia, Jan. 15, 1789. Ibid., vol. 30, p. 179.

[61] Letter to Thomas Jefferson, Washington, from Thomas Claxton, Philadelphia, June 13, 1802. (MS, Massachusetts Historical Society.) The straw-matting samples are no longer with the letter. Reprinted in Marie G. Kimball, "The Original Furnishings of the White House, Part II," *Antiques* (July 1929), vol. 16, p. 36.

[62] Memorandum by Thomas Jefferson from Thomas Claxton's letter of June 13, 1802. (MS, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division.) Thomas Jefferson papers, 1802.

> room when the table is set and be taken up when the table is removed, merely to secure a very handsome floor from grease and the scouring which that necessitates. The straw would turn up with the grease itself and would also wear with such repeated rolling and unrolling, but I thank you much for your information of the cost of English painted cloth. At 3 dollars a square yard the floor cloth would cost me 100 D, which is far beyond the worth of the object.[63]

Nevertheless, as pointed out earlier, a floorcloth eventually was obtained for use in the south dining room of the White House.

Further proof that the straw carpets and matting available in this country were often products of the Far East are the "Canton mats for floors," India and East India floormats, and East India straw carpeting advertised for sale in the *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser* on June 6 and September 7, 1803, and May 12 and June 20, 1808. At "Richmond Hill," according to the 1797 inventory, Aaron Burr was using "India Matts" in the "Hall up Stairs," the "Garret Bed Room," and the "Garret Hall." Spain may have been another source of supply of straw floor coverings. In 1797, one Baltimore merchant advertised in the *City Gazette and Daily Telegraph* of March 17 that he had received from Rotterdam a general assortment of goods including "15 bales Spanish Matts for Carpeting." Although the name implies that the mats were of Spanish origin, it is possible that they were Spanish only because of transshipment through that country from the Far East and therefore were not a product of Spain. Or, what seems the more likely explanation is that the name was derived from the material used in their manufacture, Spanish rush. In the 1767 edition of Bailey's *Dictionary*, "mat-weed" is defined as "an herb or plant called also feather grass, and Spanish rush of which mats . . . are made."

Jefferson's reasons for rejecting the matting and the criticism voiced by Israel Acrelius at an earlier date suggest that straw floor coverings probably had limited use. The "large Matt for entry" mentioned before, as well as those in use at "Richmond Hill," point to the use of straw matting in both entrances and passages or hallways. In 1766, Charles Carroll ordered "1 piece of Matting for Passages" among other goods from his London merchant.[64] The inventory entries cited previously reveal that underfoot furnishings of straw were also used in chambers or bedrooms. In addition, straw matting may have been used under carpets as padding, or on top as a protective coating, or else as either a temporary or summertime floor covering. It is interesting to note that the use of matting in these ways seems to have been common in the 19th century. According to Thomas Webster's *An Encyclopaedia of Domestic Economy*, published in New York in 1845: "Matting is used in some cases instead of carpets. The best are India mats, which are used to lay over carpets, particularly in summer, from their being cool. They are durable."

Baize also was used in this way at an earlier date but for a different reason according to Thomas Sheraton's *The Cabinet Dictionary*, published in London in 1803. Described as "a sort of open woollen stuff, having a long nap, sometimes frized, and sometimes not," baize was stated to be used by upholsterers "to cover over carpets, and made to fit round the room, to save them." This would seem to have been the practice at "Richmond Hill," Aaron Burr's residence in New York City. In the "Blue or drawing Room" was "1 Elegant Turkey carpet" and "a Carpet of Blue Bays to cover the turkey ditto." Also listed among the contents of this room in the 1797 inventory was "the green Margin to the Carpet (of cloth)." Both the choice of blue as the color of the baize to suit the color of the room and the addition of a border suggest a stylish scheme of decor. A baize carpet cover was used in the dining room, too. The inventory listed "1 Brussels Carpet" and "1 Green bays Carpet."

This custom of using carpet covers also was followed by Mrs. Abigail Adams during her brief stay in the White House. The inventory taken in 1801 lists among the contents of the dining room, "1 Brussels Carpet with Green Baize Cover." It is possible that this also was the intent of Mrs. Adams in laying a floorcloth during the summer season at her house in Massachusetts. Or perhaps it was simply her custom to change the underfoot furnishings in the spring, putting the winter carpets away until fall. According to early 19th-century practice as reported in Webster's *Encyclopaedia*, carpets were taken up in the spring,

[63] Letter from Thomas Jefferson, Washington, to Thomas Claxton, Philadelphia, June 18, 1802. (MS, Massachusetts Historical Society.) Reprinted in KIMBALL, loc. cit. (footnote 61).

[64] Invoice of goods enclosed in a letter from Charles Carroll, barrister, Maryland, to Mr. William Anderson, London, Oct. 29, 1766. In "Letters of Charles Carroll, Barrister," op. cit. (footnote 14) (September 1941), vol. 36, p. 340.

cleaned and stored for the duration of the warm weather, "the floors in the mean time being only partially covered with oil cloth or matting." That this was also an 18th-century practice in America, if not in Europe, is indicated by the surprise foreign travelers expressed at finding carpeted rather than bare floors in some American homes during the summertime. Brissot de Warville, for instance, apparently was shocked somewhat by the summertime use of floor coverings in this country which he visited in 1788. Indeed, he seems to have viewed the entire subject of underfoot furnishings in America as a moral issue. In reference to luxury, the Frenchman wrote:

> It already appears: they have carpets, elegant carpets; it is a favourite taste with the Americans; they receive it from the interested avarice of their old masters the English.
>
> A carpet in summer is an absurdity; yet they spread them in this season, and from vanity: this vanity excuses itself by saying that the carpet is an ornament; that is to say, they sacrifice reason and utility to show.[65]

Moreau de Saint Méry, a countryman of Brissot's who visited America in the 1790s held a more tolerant view of floor-covering customs in this country. Nevertheless, Moreau, too, seems to have raised his eyebrows when it came to the summertime use of carpets. "[The Americans] have carpets imported from England, and these are kept laid even during the summer, except in Charleston, where they are unrolled only during the winter and after noon, and kept rolled the rest of the time."[66] Despite Moreau's observations it seems possible that some Northerners also limited their use of floor coverings to the winter months. This is suggested by Mrs. Anne Grant's description of the Schuyler's house in New York, the "Flats." Recalling its appearance prior to the Revolutionary War she noted that the "winter-rooms had carpets."[67] This quotation seems to imply that rooms used in the summer were without carpets.

No doubt, Moreau de Saint Méry who disapproved of the use of carpets in the summer was well aware of the need for floor coverings in the winter. During his American sojourn, he observed that "good carpeting tends to concentrate the heat, which is an advantage in a country where, as I have said, rooms are drafty."[68] That this function of floor coverings was indeed appreciated by Americans, too, is proved by Benjamin Henry Latrobe's correspondence concerning the designs he submitted in 1803 for Dickinson College at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. In reference to the "distribution, and arrangements of apartments," he explained that the rooms used the most were on the south since the north side of the building would be subjected to cold winds, rain, and sleet. This talented and thoughtful architect then went on to note: "There are indeed two Chambers in the N.E. wing on each story.—If these Chambers be inhabited by Preceptors, the one as a study, the other as a Bedchamber, the disadvantages of the Aspect must be overcome by such means, of Curtains & Carpets, as a Student does not so easily acquire."[69] Indeed, even straw carpeting would have been of some help in a cold north room "to concentrate the heat." Perhaps it was for this reason that straw mats were found in bedchambers where they may have served as bedside rugs.

As to the appearance of straw floor coverings, it is evident from Claxton's mention of red and white variegated matting that some were patterned and colored. Possibly some of the straw mats and carpets of the 18th century also were very much like the present-day imports of plain weave and natural color from the Orient.

Although their exact construction and purpose remain problematical, it is clear that carpets and matting of straw were available and used at least in a limited way on floors in this country during the second half of the 18th and on into the 19th century.

INGRAIN

Ingrain as well as Scotch, Kilmarnock, Kidderminster, and English were all names employed in the 18th century for pileless, loom-woven floor coverings of double construction. These carpets were made, as were two-ply coverlets for beds, by simultaneously weaving and interweaving two cloths of different colors in such a way as to allow first one cloth

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[65] Jacques Pierre Brissot de Warville, *New Travels in the United States of America, Performed in 1788* (2d. ed.; London: J. S. Jordan, 1794), vol. 1, p. 270.

[66] *Moreau de St. Méry's American Journey [1793-1798]*, trans. and edit. Kenneth Roberts and Anna M. Roberts (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1947), p. 264.

[67] Grant, loc. cit. (footnote 31).

[68] *Moreau de St. Méry's American Journey*, op. cit. (footnote 66), p. 326.

[69] Talbot Hamlin, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 193.

and then the other to appear on the surface. The result was a smooth-faced or flat material of double construction with a pattern, commonly of two colors, on both sides. In other words, it was reversible, an advantage of ingrain over other types of carpeting.

These double-woven floor coverings were manufactured in various places after which they were often named either specifically as to town or generally as to country. There were "English" carpets as well as those from Kidderminster, a town in England that had been associated with carpets in the 17th century and where the manufacture of double-cloth carpets is generally believed to date from about 1735. In Scotland, Kilmarnock was similarly associated with carpets although double-cloth weaving in that town is not believed to have started until the 1780s. Nevertheless, the manufacture of woven carpeting in Scotland would appear to have begun much earlier because in the middle of the 18th century it was well enough known to serve as an example to explain the type of carpet made at Kidderminster. The comparison was made in 1751 by an Englishman, Bishop Pococke, who wrote of his earlier visit to Kidderminster:

> That place is famous for carpets made without nap, like the Scotch, but now they make the same as at Wilton, and it is said they are attempting to weave 'em in one piece.[70]

Clearly, loom-woven carpets without pile were closely identified with Scotland at this date. And before long, "Scotch" seems to have become a synonym for this type of carpet, whatever its origin. "Ingrain" also was synonymous with pileless carpets. Of all the names used, this one is, perhaps, the most accurate since the threads were actually ingrained into each other. Ingrain also may mean dyed in the fiber or yarn and therefore might be applied to any carpet made of colored threads dyed before being woven. One or the other of the definitions or both of course could have been intended when the word ingrain was used. The word "Scotch" is subject to the same double meaning. It might denote either type or place of origin. Nevertheless, the terms "ingrain" and "Scotch" seem to have been associated more often than not with pileless, double-cloth weavings for floors in both the 18th and the 19th centuries.

On this side of the Atlantic, double-woven carpets were available in most of the large port cities during the second half of the 18th century. "English Carpets," for example, were listed among a complete set of household furniture "just imported . . . from London" that was advertised for sale in the Annapolis *Maryland Gazette* of June 25, 1752. Earlier in the same year, a notice in the *Boston Evening Post* of February 24 mentioned "2 small English Carpets for Bed sides" among the stolen goods "Taken off a Shop Window at Noon." In 1766, Charles Carroll ordered among other items from London, "1 Good English Carpet wth. Lively Colours 12/4 by 14."[71]

English was still being used as one name for pileless, two-ply carpets a quarter of a century later when a merchant announced in the *New-York Daily Advertiser* of June 16, 1791, that he had "just received by the last Spring vessels" and had for sale "Carpets & Carpeting, English ingrained, of superior quality, both black & green grounds." And in 1798, New Yorkers could buy "Cheap for Cash English ingrain and Brussels Carpeting," according to an advertisement in the August 27 issue of the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser*. An advertisement in the same newspaper on May 22 of the following year for the sale of floor coverings included "English ingrained" carpeting, 36 inches wide.

These carpets were sometimes ordered by a specific name such as the "2 Kilmarnock Carpets, 1 large and 1 small" listed in the Jacquelin invoice of 1769, previously cited. But the general designation "Scotch" was usually employed. For instance, among the goods which a New York merchant, James Beekman, requested from Peach and Pierce of Bristol, England, in a "memorandum for sundries," dated December 12, 1770, were "1 piece Scotch Carpetting yard wide quantity about 30 yard" as well as the same amount of this type of carpeting in each of the following widths: yard and a half, three-fourths, and half yard. A marginal note accompanying this portion of Beekman's order read: "bright colours cheapest Sort for tryal."[72] Earlier in the same year a Virginian,

[70] *The Travels Through England of Dr. Richard Pococke, successively Bishop of Meath and of Ossory, During 1750, 1751, and later years*, edit. James Joel Cartwright, *Camden Society* (1888), new ser., vol. 42, part 1, p. 230.

[71] Invoice of goods enclosed in a letter from Charles Carroll, barrister, Maryland, to Mr. William Anderson, London, Oct. 29, 1766. In "Letters of Charles Carroll, Barrister," op. cit. (footnote 14) (September 1941), vol. 36, p. 339.

[72] Letter from James Beekman, New York, to Peach and Pierce, Bristol, England, Dec. 12, 1770. In *The Beekman Mercantile Papers, 1746–1799*, transcribed and edit. Philip L. White (New York: The New-York Historical Society, 1956), vol. 2, p. 883.

Mann Page, in a letter of February 22, 1770, instructed his London agents, John Norton and Son, to buy "1 large Scotch Carpet" besides other "Goods for my Family, which please to send by the first safe Opportunity, to be landed where I live near Fredericksburg." [73] And Robert Carter, refurbishing his Virginia plantation, "Nomini Hall," in 1772, after residing in Williamsburg for a number of years, directed James Gildart of Liverpool to ship him a number of items including "2 Scotch Carpits, 1 of them 15 feet square, the other 18 feet by 20." [74]

Scotch also was the name that usually appeared in the inventories and newspaper advertisements of the period. In fact, it was the one name of the four or five used for two-ply carpets in the 18th century that was found in the inventories studied. Although this may not seem unusual, it is surprising that the inventories in which there were entries for Scotch carpets numbered no more than three. In other words, only three inventories listed double-woven carpets by any of the recognized names. Such limited ownership is difficult to explain, although some of the unidentified carpets listed in the inventories, of course, may have been of this type. Possibly the "2 homspn. Carpets" mentioned in the Jackson inventory of 1758 or the "Woolen Carpet" valued at 16 shillings 8 pence mentioned in the Stevenson inventory of 1776 were of two-ply construction. To be sure, Mrs. Franklin had found fault with the Scotch carpet in her parlor, though not with the one in the small room; and Sheraton in his *Cabinet Dictionary* of 1803 stated: "Scots carpet . . . is one of the most inferior kind." In spite of the poor quality implied by the dearth of inventory entries, double-woven carpets were mentioned often enough in the advertisements of American newspapers studied to suggest that the supply was fairly adequate and the demand reasonably steady during the second half of the 18th century. Indeed, in 1790 when Tobias Lear was attempting to purchase floor coverings in New York for President Washington, there seemed to be nothing available but Scotch carpets. In a letter addressed to Clement Biddle, which will be referred to in connection with Wilton carpets, Lear complained: "We can get no Carpet in New York to suit the Room, nor Carpeting of the best kind. Scotch Carpeting is almost the only kind to be found here."

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the name "Scotch" did not appear in any of the Suffolk County, Massachusetts, inventories studied except those of Mr. Robert Gould and Dr. Pemberton, both recorded in 1777, and that of Joshua Winslow recorded in 1778. One of the Scotch carpets listed in the Gould inventory has already been mentioned in reference to its possible use with a floorcloth. Besides this "Scotts Carpet," valued at 16 shillings, that was located in the parlor of the Boston merchant's house, there were "6 yd. Scotch Carpet 6/" along with a Wilton carpet and stair carpeting in the front chamber, "1 large Scotch Carpet 30/ 1 Small Do. /12 3 pr. Wilton Do. 9/" in the second chamber, "Scotch Carpet 12/" and 3 pieces of unidentified carpet in the kitchen chamber, and in the chamber entry "1 Scotch Carpet 12/" as well as a stair carpet and floorcloth. The total for the Gould household was five Scotch carpets plus six yards of Scotch carpeting. In addition to the carpet in the entryway, Scotch carpets appeared in four rooms of the Gould house. These rooms were the parlor, and the front, second, and kitchen chambers. The carpets noted as Scotch in the "Inventory of Furniture etc. belonging to Dr. Pemberton's Estate" totaled four and a piece. The listings were for "Scotch carpet 100 -piece do. 10/" and "3 Scotch Carpets 30/" besides an unidentified "Small Carpet 6/." [75] The Winslow inventory of 1778 included a "Scotch Carpet 8" in the back chamber over the parlor, in addition to the previously mentioned canvas floorcloth and Turkey carpets.

The newspaper references in which the name "Scotch" appeared were more numerous than the inventory entries. In 1760 they included sale notices in the *Boston Gazette* which listed on September 1 "Scotch Floor Carpets" and in the *Boston News-Letter* which listed on December 18 "Scotch carpets" along with other importations. In the same year "Scot's Carpets" also were being sold by J. Alexander and Company according to their advertisement in the *New-York Gazette* of June 30. The "Carpets and Carpeting" that were among items to be sold such as Kilmarnock and Stewarton blue caps "just imported from Glasgow," mentioned in the *Boston Gazette* of July 5, 1762, were undoubtedly Scotch in origin and presumably also in type if not in name. In New York

[73] Letter to John Norton, Esq., London, from Mann Page, Virginia, Feb. 22, 1770. In *John Norton and Sons*, op. cit. (footnote 24), pp. 125 and 123.

[74] Louis Morton, *Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, A Virginia Tobacco Planter of the Eighteenth Century* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., 1941), p. 208.

[75] Inventory of Ebenezer Pemberton, Oct. 19, 1777. In Suffolk Probate Books, vol. 76, pp. 419–23.

a year later J. Alexander and Company was offering for sale "English and Scot's carpets and Hair Cloth for Stairs." Colonists in Williamsburg, too, could purchase "Scotch carpets and carpeting of almost all sizes" according to an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* of September 23, 1773. The following year a merchant in New York announced on May 12 in *Rivington's New-York Gazetteer* that he had "Scotch carpets and carpeting, to be sold very low" in price. After the Revolutionary War, as before, the name "Scotch" continued to appear frequently in the newspaper advertisements. In 1791, "Scotch Carpets" were part of a "fresh Assortment" of goods imported from London and offered for sale on January 1 in the *New-York Daily Advertiser* and on June 16 there was a notice for the sale of imported carpets and carpeting including "common Scotch" ingrain. Among the goods received by the "late arrivals from Europe" being offered for sale in 1796 by a Philadelphia upholsterer and paperhanger, who advertised in the *Pennsylvania Packet* of October 31, were "Ingrain Scotch Carpeting" as well as Brussels and Wilton "of excellent quality." An upholsterer in New York City, also, sold carpets and carpeting of European origin according to his advertisement in the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser* of May 22, 1799, which mentioned both "Scotch ingrained" and "4-4 [yards] common Scotch."

Although the name "ingrain" usually appeared in conjunction with the locality name employed for double-woven floor coverings, it was used alone in an occasional advertisement. For example, a sale notice in the *New-York Daily Advertiser* of January 1, 1791, listed "Ingrain'd Carpeting and Scotch Carpets."

Not all carpets of this type offered for sale were new or imported. Among the advertisements examined, some were found in which the carpets were part of some "elegant and valuable household furniture" that was to be sold at "public Vendue." English carpets were sold in this way in Annapolis in 1752, and in Boston in 1763, according to an advertisement on June 16, in the *Boston News-Letter*. Another advertisement in that newspaper on November 11, 1773, and one in the *New-York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury* of June 29, 1772, indicate that secondhand or used Scotch carpets were available in New York City as well as in Boston. And in Philadelphia, "a Scotch carpet and 2 bed[-side] ditto, new" were listed among the "Furniture and Goods of the Hon. John Penn, Senr." which were to be "exposed to Sale . . . at his House in Chestnut-street," in May 1788.[76]

Advertisements further indicate, as do other sources, that pileless, loom-woven floor coverings were made in this country in the 18th century. Perhaps this was the type meant by Joseph Cherry in his advertisement of October 26, 1796, in the *Herald* of New York, which read: "The subscriber respectfully informs his friends and the public in general, that he has commenced the weaving business in Division Street . . . where he carries on the Weaving of linen, lawns, Diapers of different kinds, Bedticks of all kinds, flowered Bedspreads of different kinds, carpeting of all kinds, from the highest to the lowest degree."

On June 13, 1797, another New York weaver, Thomas Thompson, placed a notice in the *Goshen Repository* stating that he had taken a shop in Blooming Grove where he intended to "carry on the weaving of Carpets, double and single Coverlids of the newest fashion." No doubt there were other professional weavers in other communities who also made carpets for whoever wanted and could afford them. The "homspn." and "Woolen" carpets listed in inventories previously mentioned may have been such products. But it is doubtful that this work of handicrafts men was of much importance in providing a domestic supply of wool floor coverings in 18th-century America.[77]

The pileless wool carpeting originally owned and used by the Copp family of Stonington, Connecticut (fig. 15), also could have been the work of professional weavers. According to tradition, however, it was made by two spinster sisters of the family in the early 19th century. Proof that such carpets were on occasion made in the home by amateur but skilled weavers is provided by Dr. William Bentley, a diarist and pastor of the East Church in Salem, Massachusetts. Of his activities on November 22, 1790, Bentley wrote:

> Had an opportunity this evening of viewing a Carpet woven after the manner of the Scotch Carpet, with admirable execution. The Lady's name is Roche, who executed it in her own private family.[78]

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[76] Marie G. Kimball, "The Furnishings of Governor Penn's Town House," *Antiques* (May 1931), vol. 19, p. 378.

[77] Arthur Harrison Cole, "The Rise of the Factory in the American Carpet Manufacture," *Facts and Factors in Economic History by Former Students of Edwin Francis Gay* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932), pp. 382–86.

[78] *The Diary of William Bentley, D.D., Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Massachusetts* (Salem: The Essex Institute, 1905–1914), vol. 1, p. 214.

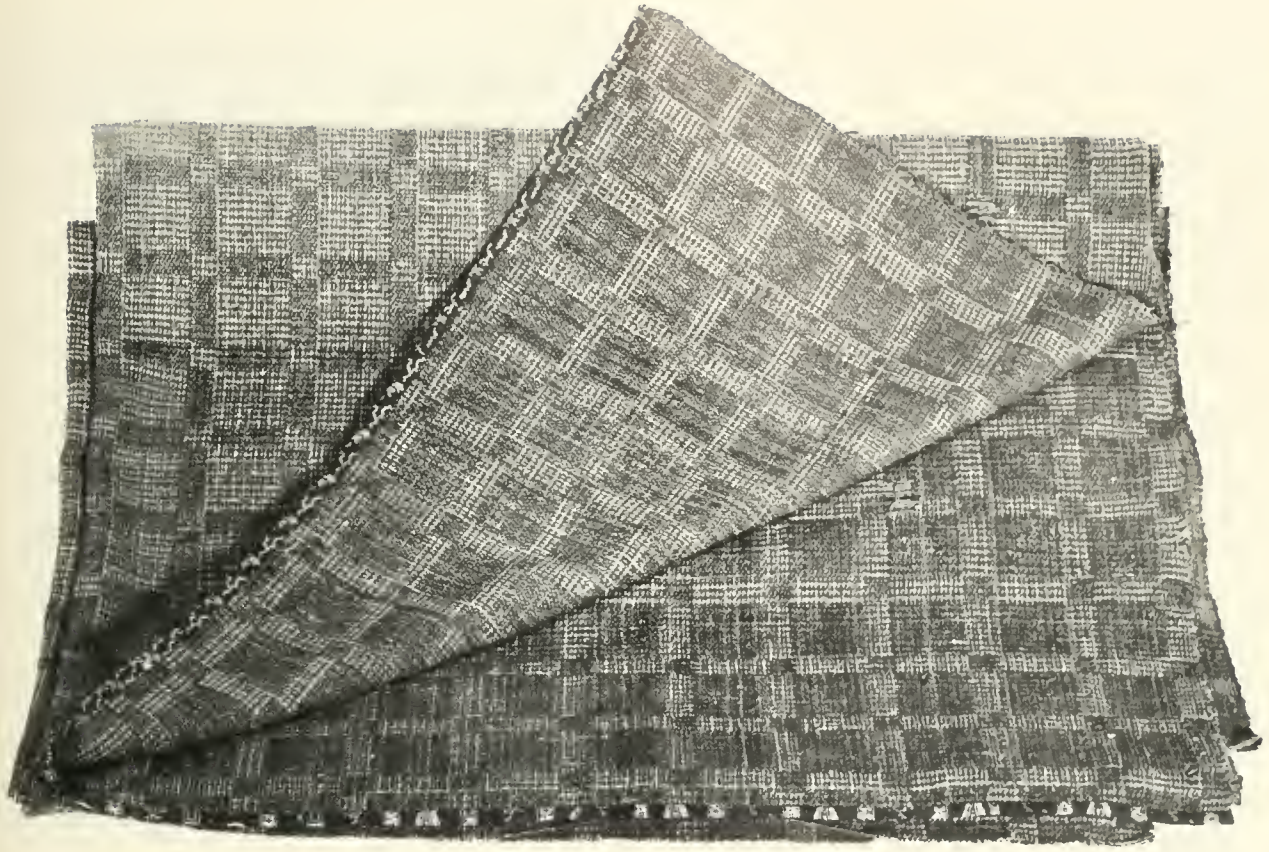

Figure 15.—Floor covering, American, early 19th century. This woven wool carpeting used by the Copp family of Stonington, Connecticut, consists of two 36-inch pieces sewed together and bound at one end with printed cotton fabric. On one side of the carpeting the large and small squares are green; the dividing bars are a mixture of yellow and orange. On the other side, the colors are reversed. (USNM 28810; Smithsonian photo 47090–C.)

The Copp family carpet is of single-cloth construction woven in 36-inch widths and has a reversible pattern of squares in shades of grayed greens and dulled yellows and oranges. Some of it is in individual pieces and some is sewed together, indicating that at one time it was a large or room-size carpet. This carpeting cannot, of course, be considered ingrain in the strictest sense of the name since it is of single- rather than double-cloth construction. Nevertheless, the fact that the carpeting is reversible is of interest insofar as it may provide a clue to a type of pattern that might have been made in a two-ply construction and was intended for use underfoot. Since the carpet is reversible, the ground color might be either green or yellow and orange according to one's desire. Similarly, the predominant color of the carpets already mentioned with "black & green grounds" would have been dependent upon which surface faced up at a given time. Other colors that might have been used for ingrain carpets in the 18th century are suggested by two references from Irish newspapers. One, an advertisement in the *Dublin Gazette* of 1762, mentioned scarlet and madder-red Scotch carpeting.[79] The other, a notice of 1764 in the *Freeman's Journal* on December 4, mentioned "Black and Yellow Bird Eye pattern" floor coverings.[80]

The patterns of most ingrains were probably simple,

[79] Ada K. Longfield, "Some Eighteenth Century Dublin Carpet-Makers," *The Burlington Magazine* (June 1943), vol. 82, p. 151.

[80] Ada K. Longfield, "History of Carpet-Making in Ireland in the 18th Century," *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* (June 1940), vol. 70, p. 78.

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but, as the designs of double-woven coverlets indicate, fairly complex patterns could be made and undoubtedly were. Possibly the floor covering seen in the portrait *Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge and his son, William* (fig. 16), done by Ralph Earl in 1790, is, if not a painted floor or floorcloth, an ingrain carpet. This room of the Tallmadge residence in Litchfield, Connecticut, also was the setting for the companion portrait *Mrs. Tallmadge with her son, Henry, and daughter, Maria* because the same floor covering is depicted with the geometric patterns and cruciform ornaments that resemble the turreted diamond-shaped motifs seen in central-Asian rugs. Ingrain could also be obtained with floral patterns. George Washington, in letters to be quoted shortly, mentioned both Scotch and Wilton in reference to the flowered carpet he wanted for the blue room at Mount Vernon. And "marble" carpeting was advertised for sale in association with English and Scotch ingrain in the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser* of May 22, 1799.

The width of ingrain carpeting was of course fixed by the loom which in the 18th century was usually of a size that produced 36-inch fabrics. This was a width that could be comfortably worked by a single weaver. Although carpeting was woven wider and narrower than a yard, it is believed that the standard width of the pileless, two-ply carpeting was 36 inches. Most Scotch carpets of even medium size were therefore made of a number of pieces sewed together, and those described as "large" were, of course, seamed too. Consequently, the full size of such carpets was most likely based on either multiples of a single width of carpeting or a combination of different widths. In most cases, however, the single pieces would have been the regulation width of a yard. Both of the carpets ordered by Robert Carter would have been made in this way. Perhaps the dimensions were determined on the basis of the 36-inch module system as well as by the size of the rooms in which they were to be used because both carpets can be translated into even yardage. The one 15 feet square could have been made up of five yard-wide pieces and the other, 18 by 20 feet, of six pieces.

The dimensions of the carpets ordered by Carter in 1772 provide an idea of what the size may have been of the "very large and handsome Carpets" that were advertised for sale at public vendue in the *Boston News-Letter* of January 13, 1762. Or the measurements of the "very large and handsome Carpets" may have been closer to 11½ by 18½ feet because a Turkey carpet of this size was described as "very large." This description was not used in the advertisement that appeared in the *Boston News-Letter* on July 11, 1771, for the sale of "a Carpet 14 Feet by 12, more Elegant than any which have been imported into this Province," although it might have been because the size of this carpet was in the category of very large. Another notice of the same year appearing in the *Virginia Gazette* on May 9, mentioned a carpet of "about eleven Feet by ten." This size might be considered large rather than very large. The adjective "large" was used for a carpet measuring 9 feet

COLONEL BENJAMIN TALLMADGE AND HIS SON, WILLIAM
by Ralph Earl, 1790
(*Courtesy of Litchfield Historical Society.*)

Figure 16.—The patterned floor covering of this room extends to the walls where it is edged with a harmonious border. This distinguished citizen of Connecticut, a Member of Congress from 1801 to 1817, and president of a bank in Litchfield, is depicted in a domestic setting with books, fringe-decorated chair and table cover, and vivid-figured floor covering.

6 inches by 6 feet 6 inches, as pointed out in connection with the Turkey and Persian carpets which because of their 9- by 9-foot dimensions also were classified as large. It seems likely that the size categories suggested for the terms "large" and "very large" in reference to Orientals also could be applied to the other kinds of movable floor coverings available in the 18th century. The large but otherwise unidentified carpets that were listed in the Suffolk County inventories of Mary Dorrington in 1776 [81] and Mr. Robert Gould and Dr. Pemberton in 1777, as well as in the newspaper advertisements previously cited, probably would have measured no more than 12 by 12 feet, since these seem to be the approximate dimensions at which carpets ceased being large and became very large.

Ingrain carpets of either large or very large dimensions would have been used in sizable parlors or chambers where they probably covered a large portion or all of the floor. The library was another room where ingrain carpets were used. According to the 1797 inventory of furniture at "Richmond Hill," the floor in "The Library" was covered with "1 Ingrained Carpet." Woven pileless carpets of considerably reduced dimensions also were used on chamber or bedroom floors because some ingrains were described as "small . . . for Bed sides." The entryway, according to the Gould inventory, was another place where Scotch carpets were used.

Available in "almost all sizes" and known by a number of names, these patterned but pileless, loom-woven, ingrain carpets were offered for sale in many of the larger cities on this side of the Atlantic and provided serviceable floor covering for American houses during the second half of the 18th century.

BRUSSELS

Brussels carpets and carpeting were characterized by a pile surface in contrast to the smooth-surface floor covering just discussed. That is, they had a surface similar to velvet fabric or to Oriental carpets. But, unlike the latter, the pile was woven and not handknotted. The Brussels-type pile was made by weaving extra warp or lengthwise threads over rods in such a way as to form loops standing up on the surface of the carpet. The manufacture of the Brussels carpet, as it was called after its supposed place of origin, is believed to have been first established in England about 1740 at Wilton. Soon after its introduction, the Brussels pile was transformed by cutting the loops into a new type of pile surface known as Wilton which will be discussed shortly. Kidderminster was another place in England where Brussels-carpet weaving was carried on, having been introduced there about 1750. Place names sometimes may have been used for the loop-pile carpeting made in England, but Brussels carpet was, and in fact remains, the term generally used for this type of floor covering wherever manufactured.

When advertised for sale in 18th-century American newspapers, Brussels carpets were sometimes mentioned among the European imports. Nevertheless, in most cases the actual place of manufacture was the British Isles since Brussels carpets were listed with such other floor coverings of British origin as Scotch, English, and Wilton. For example, a Philadelphia upholsterer and paperhanger, C. Alder, stated in the *Pennsylvania Packet* of October 31, 1796, that among the goods that he had "received by the late arrivals from Europe" and was "opening for sale" at his shop was a "large quantity of Brussels, Wilton, and Ingrain Scotch Carpeting, of excellent quality." Occasionally a retailer provided information in a newspaper advertisement about the appearance if not the place of origin of his merchandise. A notice inserted by a New York merchant in the *Commercial Advertiser* of June 21, 1798, read: "Carpets and Carpeting of the very best Brussels quality, to the newest landscape and other elegant patterns, now opening and for sale at John Brower's." As the advertisement implies, Brussels-type floor coverings were sometimes rather elaborate. For the most part, though, they probably had floral or small neat patterns. Patterns, whether simple or elaborate, were created by using two or more differently colored threads for the pile, each colored thread lying unseen in the foundation of the carpet until brought to the surface according to the need for that color in the pattern. If the carpet was plain then all the pile threads would, of course, have been the same color.

Unfortunately most advertisements are not as informative as the above one about the appearance of the items being offered for sale. Usually the merchandise is simply listed by name as in the following two newspaper advertisements of 1798. On June 16, a New York upholsterer announced in the *Weekly Museum* that he had "an assortment of Brussels carpeting" for sale and in the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser* of August 27, another upholsterer,

[81] Inventory of Mary Dorrington, Nov. 18, 1776. In Suffolk Probate Books, vol. 75, pp. 436–38.

Andrew S. Norwood, stated that he would sell "Cheap for Cash . . . Brussels Carpeting."

Most of the types of floor coverings already mentioned were stocked by Norwood at his "Carpet Store" which was opened in 1799 according to an advertisement in the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser* on May 22. A listing of the goods for sale included "Brussels and Wilton Carpeting and Carpets of all sizes from 3–2 by 4 up to 6¾ by 7½ yds. striped Brussels carpeting for Stairs and Entries."

As with other woven carpeting, Brussels was made in narrow strips, probably of 27- or 36-inch widths, which necessitated the joining of several pieces to make a carpet. Based on this advertisement, it appears that both Brussels and Wilton were woven in the same widths and were made into carpets of similar dimensions. This apparent identity in sizes for carpeting and room carpets suggests that there also may have been a similar relationship in the measurements of stair carpeting of the two types. Most likely the width of the "Brussels carpeting for Stairs and Entries" was slightly under or over a yard, a size that could be woven in one piece and would provide adequate covering for most stairs.

Besides providing information about the dimensions of Brussels floor coverings, Norwood's advertisement reveals that the loop-pile carpeting was made with striped patterns in addition to the already mentioned "newest landscape and other elegant patterns." Whether the stripes were horizontal or vertical is not known, but the advertisement leaves little doubt that Brussels with striped patterns were intended for entryways and staircases. Presumably landscape and floral patterns were used in parlors or front rooms.

Although Brussels carpets and carpeting were being sold in the larger coastal cities by the latter part of the 18th century, according to the sources studied, they do not seem to have had the same popularity as Wiltons in this country. Nevertheless, the fact that Mrs. Margaret Beeckman Livingston, mistress of "Clermont," the Livingston manor house in New York, purchased "Thirty six yards of Broussells carpett with border," valued at £36 according to her household account book, is an indication that this type of floor covering was considered fashionable and its qualities appreciated in the 18th century.[82] This is further verified by Aaron Burr's use of Brussels carpets at "Richmond Hill." The floor in the dining room as well as the breakfast room was covered with "Brussels Carpet" according to the 1797 inventory of furniture. And Brussels appears to have been the stylish floor covering during the early 19th century because it was the choice for the White House, first by John Adams and then by Thomas Jefferson. As the first residents of the Executive Mansion, President and Mrs. John Adams lived there for only a brief four months. Nevertheless, the "Inventory of the Furniture in the President's House, the property of the United States, taken February 26th 1801," previously cited, indicates that both the public and private rooms had been furnished, including floor coverings, in that short

PORTRAIT OF MARY WARNER
by John Singleton Copley, 1767
(*Courtesy of The Toledo Museum of Art, gift of Florence Scott Libbey, 1950.*)

Figure 17.—The colors of this elaborately patterned carpet are predominately deep red, white, and a soft dark blue, with touches of yellow and black. The floor covering, the richly tasseled squab or cushion on which young Mary is kneeling, and the tastefully upholstered chair suggest that the Warner house was handsomely and comfortably furnished.

[82] HELEN EVERTSON SMITH, *Colonial Days and Ways as Gathered From Family Papers* (New York: The Century Co., 1900), p. 204.

a time. On the first floor there was "1 Brussels Carpet" each, in the "Levee Room," the "Breakfast Room," and the "Lodging Room," while the "Dining Room" had "1 Brussels Carpet with Green Baize Cover." On the second floor the "President's Office," the "Ladies Drawing Room," and the "Secretary's Office" each had "1 Brussels Carpet." The "President's Bed Room," also on the second floor, had "1 Brussels carpet . . . in tolerable order." In addition, a number of other rooms, upstairs as well as down, had floor coverings. Downstairs the "President's Drawing Room" had "1 common carpet" as did some of the rooms upstairs such as bedrooms, the dressing room, and the hall. The "Back Stair Case" was "Carpetted compleat" and downstairs in the "Grand Hall" the floor was "laid with common carpeting." Thomas Jefferson probably used some of these carpets besides obtaining new ones during his stay in the White House. According to the inventory of 1809, the President's sitting room, the President's drawing room, and the large, northwest corner dining room as well as the small, south front bedroom each had an "elegant Brussels carpet." There was a "Brussels carpet on the floor" in the large, north side room, as well as in the President's bedroom and the passage adjoining it. Brussels carpet also was used in the large, south front bedroom, lady's drawing room, and the two, north front bedchambers. No doubt, then as now, Brussels carpets and carpeting provided a wool-pile floor covering that was long wearing and easy to care for and at the same time was available in "elegant patterns."

WILTON

Wilton carpets and carpeting are still being manufactured and, as in the past, continue to be characterized by a cut-pile surface. The surface of the Wilton was in fact a refinement of the Brussels-type pile. As already explained, the manufacture of floor coverings with a loop pile was first established about 1740 at Wilton and thereafter in other carpet-weaving towns. After its introduction at Wilton a change was effected in the Brussels-type pile by cutting the loops. Although this technique may have been practiced on the continent and elsewhere in England, it is believed to have been an early specialty of Wilton. Subsequently, woven floor covering with a cut pile was, and indeed still is, known as Wilton type in contrast to that with a loop pile known as Brussels type.

The carpets made at Wilton, according to Bishop Pococke who visited the English town in 1754, were "like those of Turkey, but narrow—about three-quarters of a yard wide." [83] The comparison of Wilton to Turkey or Oriental carpets was most likely a reference to the cut-pile surface of a rich, soft texture. It also may have been to the color and design of the English-made carpets, but for the most part Wiltons probably had floral or geometric patterns or were plain. Wiltons often were patterned; this is suggested by the instructions issued in connection with the premiums awarded in 1757 and subsequent years by the Dublin Society to encourage carpet-making in Ireland. Wiltons were to be made "ordering the Flower, or Figure, so that they may join." [84] This seems to indicate that the previous entries of Wiltons, a type first mentioned in the 1752 premiums, had been patterned, and consequently presented some difficulties when the pieces were joined together to make a carpet. Information about patterned Wiltons also appears again in the Dublin Society's premium competition for 1780. In that year an award was offered for "the best Irish Carpet, 28 ft. long, 18 inches wide in imitation of ancient Mosaic with a foot Border round it, to be made of the Wilton kind." [85]

The fact that the design was to simulate an ancient mosaic may reflect the new fashion based on Greco-Roman material that was beginning to characterize architecture and furnishings at that time. A later Irish reference to the sale of "a great variety of carpeting in the sprigway, from half a yard wide to eight quarters wide," in the *Hibernian Chronical* of Cork in 1783, although not mentioning the type of floor covering, does reveal a continuing taste in the 18th century for floral designs.[86] Further evidence that patterned Wiltons were favored in the 18th century appears in George Washington's instructions, to be discussed shortly, concerning the carpet for the blue parlor at Mount Vernon. Either "the ground or principal flowers in it ought to be blue," he wrote in 1797. No matter what form the pattern of a Wilton carpet may have taken, it was made in the same way as that of a Brussels: that is, by using differently colored threads for the pile and bringing them to the surface when a particular color was called for in the design. If the carpet was plain, then all the pile threads would, of course, have been the same color.

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[83] *The Travels through England of Dr. Richard Pococke*, op. cit. (footnote 70) (1889), new ser., vol. 44, part 2, p. 48.

[84] Longfield, op. cit. (footnote 80), p. 70.

[85] Ibid., p. 81.

[86] Ibid., p. 70.

PORTRAIT OF NICHOLAS BOYLSTON
by John Singleton Copley, 1772–73
(*Courtesy of Harvard College and The Fogg Art Museum.*)

Figure 18.—This rich and handsome carpet is a dark blue-green with large designs of leaves and dull red-orange flowers. Copley has depicted this Boston merchant informally attired in elegant fabrics, a blue morning robe or banyan, rose turban, and red morocco slippers.

Since the carpeting was woven in narrow widths, most Wilton carpets were formed of strips joined together. It was this method of transforming carpeting into carpets that Benjamin Franklin had explained to his wife in a letter from London in 1758, to be mentioned shortly. Of the carpeting he was sending, Franklin wrote that it was "to be sow'd together" either as "one large or two small" carpets.

The "Wilton carpets" offered for sale among other London imports in the *Boston News-Letter* of October 13, 1768, were most likely made in this way as presumably were the "three very beautiful rich Wilton carpets, three yards square each," that were advertised in the same newspaper on December 21 of the following year. The 3-yard size of the carpets may have been achieved by using strips either a full yard wide or the three-quarters of a yard dimension cited by the Englishman quoted above. There surely were some variations in the size of the strips because "Wilton Carpeting and carpets of all sizes from 3–2 by 4 up to 6¾ by 7½ yds." were advertised for sale in the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser* of May 22, 1799. The three-fourths of a yard width, however, was probably the standard one. Both the 6¾ and 7½ dimensions of the above Wiltons can be broken down into strips of the suggested regulation size, 9 widths being needed in the one case and 10 in the other. In spite of the fact that the overall dimensions are not given for the "few very handsome Wilton Floor Carpets; Stair ditto" included in the items for sale "just imported from London," that were mentioned in the *Boston News-Letter* of May 23, 1771, or the imported "*Wilton* Carpets" which were "to be sold very cheap, for ready Money" in Williamsburg, according to the *Virginia Gazette* of October 29, 1772, the floor carpets were very likely seamed. But the stair carpets probably were not, since any width under or slightly over a yard, which was presumably adequate for most stair coverings, could be woven in one piece. Single or unseamed widths of cut-pile floor coverings also could be obtained "in the piece," according to the sale notice of an upholsterer, John Mason, in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* of October 28, 1771, which included in a list of imported merchandise "the best Wilton Carpetting, in the piece." Perhaps this was purchased for use in halls, or as foot carpets, or even as an upholstery fabric. That Wilton was, indeed, used for covering furniture as well as floors is revealed by James Beekman's order for goods on December 9, 1769, addressed to Thomas Harris, London. The New York merchant wrote: "send me as much fine wilton Carpetting as will cover 7 chier Bottems, small figure and bright-colours." [87]

Although the sale of Mr. Penn's town-house furnishings included "2 beautiful Wilton, beside carpets per-

[87] Letter from James Beekman, New York, to Thomas Harris, London, Dec. 9, 1769. In *Beekman Mercantile Papers*, op. cit. (footnote 72), vol. 2, p. 807.

fectly new," it is likely that the items sold at most auctions were used or secondhand. Presumably that was the condition of the "Turkey and Wilton Carpets" as well as the other "furniture of the late John Apthorp, Esq.," that was advertised to be sold at auction in the *Boston News-Letter* of May 13, 1773. There need be no doubt, however, about the "*Wilton* carpet" mentioned in an advertisement in the January 27, 1776, issue of the *Virginia Gazette* because the heading read: "FOR SALE, A GREAT Variety of Household Furniture of the very best Kinds, which have been little used." Williamsburg, Philadelphia, and Boston were not the only urban centers where floor coverings could be purchased at auction. There was a demand for secondhand Wiltons in New York and Baltimore, too. The *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Daily Advertiser* of June 24, 1777, carried an advertisement announcing the sale at "Public Vendue" of household furniture that included "a large elegant Wilton Carpet," and both "Wilton and Scotch carpets" were listed as items that were to be offered for "Sale by Auction" in New York according to a notice that appeared on April 28, 1781, in the *Royal Gazette*.

For the purchase of new floor coverings there was the "Furniture Ware-House" on Nassau Street in New York City. The upholsterer-owner, William Mooney, announced by an advertisement in the *New-York Journal* of October 27, 1785, that he had "Elegant Wilton Carpets and Carpeting" for sale. A notice in the *New-York Daily Advertiser* on January 1, 1791, indicated that Mooney's shop on Nassau Street was still supplying New Yorkers with "Elegant Wilton carpets" as well as such other underfoot furnishings as ingrain carpeting and Scotch carpets. And in Philadelphia, Wilton and other types of carpeting also were sold by an upholsterer, C. Alder. He described his selection in the *Pennsylvania Packet* of October 31, 1796, as "of excellent quality."

These woven cut-pile carpets, characterized by a fine velvety texture, undoubtedly provided an appropriate type of floor covering for the fashionably furnished rooms found in the houses of some of the wealthier colonists. For example, when Robert Carter moved his family from their plantation, "Nomini Hall," to Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1761, he wrote to his London merchant for numerous items. These included a large mirror, wallpapers "to hang three parlours" as well as a staircase and two passages, brass sconces, three pairs of yellow silk-and-worsted damask festoon window curtains and the same for the seats of 18 chairs, and a Wilton carpet."[88] Clearly the house "in the city" was to be elegantly furnished. In Boston, too, Wiltons provided suitable floor coverings in such well-appointed households as that of the merchant Mr. Robert Gould. There was a Wilton carpet in the front chamber, three pieces of Wilton in the second chamber, and three strips of Wilton carpet in the front room as well as the other underfoot furnishings, including "19 yd. Do. [Wilton] Stair Carpet" listed in the previously cited inventory of his property recorded in 1777. Another Boston inventory recorded in 1777 indicated that some of the floors in Doctor Joseph Warren's house were similarly covered, for he owned "two Wilton Carpets."

Houses carpeted with Wiltons also were to be found elsewhere in New England. In Newburyport, Massachusetts, the furnishings of James Prince's handsome brick mansion included two Wilton carpets of 72 yards each.[89] Perhaps these are the floor coverings depicted in two of the portraits of this merchant's family painted in 1801 by John Brewster, Jr., *James Prince and his son, William* (fig. 19) and *James Prince, Jr.* In both paintings the underfoot decoration has a medium-gray ground ornamented with lighter and darker shades of the same color in what might be a muted floral motif, a splotch pattern or marbelized design. Philadelphia was another urban center where Wilton carpeted floors were the choice of well-to-do and prominent persons. Governor Penn, as an example, had two "beautiful Wilton" carpets in his Chestnut Street residence. Farther south the taste in furnishings of country gentlemen compared favorably with that of their city cousins. Of his visit to "Sully," Richard Bland Lee's country seat in Virginia, Thomas Lee Shippen, a Philadelphian, wrote to his father on October 24, 1797, as follows.

> I would fain give you some idea of the elegance in which this kinsman of ours has settled himself to make amends for the caprice of his fellow citizens. The house is new, built by himself about 3 years ago and lately furnished from Philada. with every article of silver plate, mahogany, Wilton carpeting and glass ware that can be conceived of that you will find in the very best furnished houses of

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[88] Kate Mason Rowland, "Robert Carter of Virginia," *Magazine of American History* (September 1893), vol. 30, p. 124.

[89] Nina Fletcher Little, "John Brewster, Jr., 1766–1854," *Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin* (October 1960), vol. 25, p. 100.

JAMES PRINCE AND SON, WILLIAM
by John Brewster, Jr., 1801
(*Courtesy of Historical Society of Old Newbury, photo courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago.*)

Figure 19.—The floor of this room is entirely covered with a pattern in shades of gray from light to dark. A letter on the portable desk is headed "Newburyport Novr. 24 1801."

> Philada. Parlours & chambers completely equipped with every luxury as well as convenience.[90]

The use of woven cut-pile carpeting in this country almost coincides with its availability in England. Wiltons began to appear on the American market soon after the middle of the 18th century. Consequently houseowners and homemakers on both sides of the Atlantic were able almost simultaneously to cover their floors with carpeting that was both stylish and serviceable. And Wilton-type floor coverings have sustained this reputation so that they are in the 20th century, as they undoubtedly were in the 18th century, one of the most satisfactory kinds of underfoot furnishings. The desire of anyone today might be the same as that expressed by John Quincy Adams in his poem "The Wants of Man."

> And maples, of fair glossy stain,
> Must form my chamber doors,
> And carpets of the Wilton grain
> Must cover all my floors.[91]

AXMINSTER

Axminster was yet another kind of pile floor covering available to the 18th-century American. As with Brussels and Wilton, the name was that of a type of pile as well as a place of manufacture. In contrast to the looped and cut-pile floor coverings which were woven in narrow strips, however, Axminster could be made in one piece without seams. And the pile,

[90] Letter from Thomas Lee Shippen, Sully, Va., to Dr. William Shippen, Jr., Philadelphia, Oct. 24, 1797. (MS, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division.) Shippen Papers, vol. 2.

[91] JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, *Poems of Religion and Society* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Miller, Orton and Mulligan, 1854), p. 18.

instead of being woven as an integral part of the foundation, was knotted to the threads which formed the foundation. In other words, Axminster-type carpets were the domestic Oriental carpets, for they were made by hand-knotting in the same way as Oriental pile rugs.

Carpet-knotting had, of course, been practiced in England at an earlier date, primarily in connection with the so-called Turkey work. The technique had, however, fallen into disuse by the second half of the 17th century.[92] As a consequence when carpet-knotting was revived a century later it was looked upon as a new industry. Initial efforts to manufacture knotted-pile carpets were made between 1750 and 1755 by Peter Parisot, first at London in association with two French emigrant weavers who had applied to him for help when they had "run themselves into Debt" attempting to make a large carpet, and later at Fulham about 1753 where he employed other foreign as well as domestic workers in the production of floor coverings.[93]

Although Parisot's enterprise failed, it provided Thomas Whitty of Axminster, who visited the Fulham manufactory in 1755—the year it closed—with the necessary stimulus and ideas to carry out his own scheme for manufacturing knotted-pile carpets. Whitty's experiments in carpet-knotting had begun in 1754 when he saw some Oriental carpets. One in particular, measuring 36 by 21 feet, led him to wonder how "a carpet of so great a breadth could be woven in figure without a seam in it." Up to the time of his visit to Fulham, Whitty's ideas "went no farther than a horizontal loom" which for commercial purposes, he later wrote, "would have been a very spare and tedious way of working." This "difficulty" was "removed" after seeing the manufactory at Fulham.[94]

Presumably Parisot's looms were vertical like the ones used in the Near East, because this was the way Whitty set up his own looms. The carpets at Axminster "are wrought in perpendicular looms, by females, whose fingers move with a velocity beyond the power of the eye to follow," noted Samuel Curwen, an American who, in 1777, saw the workshop some 22 years after Thomas Whitty had begun his first knotted-pile carpet.[95] Some idea of how the manufactory was run and the carpets made at Axminster is provided by Mrs. Abigail Adams, who visited Whitty's workshop during her husband's appointment as American minister to England. In a letter addressed to her sister and dated September 15, 1778, the future mistress of the White House wrote:

> It [Axminster] is a small place, but has two manufactures of note; one of carpets, and one of tapes; both of which we visited. The manufactory of the carpets is wholly performed by women and children. You would have been surprised to see in how ordinary a building this rich manufactory was carried on. A few glass windows in some of our barns would be equal to it. They have but two prices for their carpets woven here; the one is eighteen shillings, and the other twenty-four, a square yard. They are woven of any dimensions you please, and without a seam. The colors are most beautiful, and the carpets very durable.[96]

Writing in her diary on July 26 at the time of the visit, Mrs. Adams was more explicit about the quality and appearance of Axminsters. "The carpets are equally durable with the Turkey, but surpass them in coulours and figure." [97]

At the same time that Whitty was beginning to weave carpets at Axminster, a number of other people were also attempting the commercial manufacture of knotted-pile carpets in England. The infant industry soon received recognition as well as encouragement because in 1756 the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce offered premiums for the best carpets measuring not less than 15 by 12 feet made after the manner of Turkish carpets, that is, using the knotting technique. The winners were the principal makers of knotted-pile carpets in England, Thomas Moore of Moorfields in 1757, Claude Passavant of Exeter in 1758, and Thomas Whitty of Axminster with whom the

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[92] KENDRICK, op. cit. (footnote 52), pp. 139–141.

[93] PETER PARISOT, *An Account of the New Manufactory of Tapestry and of Carpets* (London, 1753). Quoted in C. E. C. TATTERSALL, *A History of British Carpets* (Benfleet, England: F. Lewis, Ltd., 1934), pp. 60–62.

[94] Thomas Whitty's recollections written in 1790. In JAMES HINE, "The Origin of Axminster Carpets," *Reports and Transactions of the Devonshire Association for the Advancement of Science, Literature, and Art* (1889), vol. 21, pp. 331–37.

[95] *The Journal and Letters of Samuel Curwen, An American in England, from 1775 to 1783*, edit. George Atkinson Ward (4th ed.; Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1864), p. 172.

[96] Letter from Mrs. Abigail Adams, London, to Mrs. Mary Cranch, Braintree, Mass., Sept. 15, 1787. In *The Letters of Mrs. Adams*, op. cit. (footnote 33), p. 332.

[97] *Abigail Adams' Diary of a Tour from London to Plymouth, 20–28 July 1787*. In *The Adams Papers*, op. cit. (footnote 20), vol. 3, p. 206.

premiums were shared both years. The moderate prices, as well as the quality of Whitty's carpets, in contrast to those asked by his competitors, once again made him a winner in 1759, the last year premiums were offered.[98] No doubt this acknowledgment of his work coupled with the reasonable prices of his products accounted for the success of the Axminster enterprise, which was run by the family until 1835 when the firm was dissolved. The success of the workshop can also be measured by the fact that the name Axminster came to be synonymous with knotted-pile carpets wherever manufactured. Although the name is still used today, Axminsters are no longer hand-knotted carpets, but rather a machine-made complex fabric resembling them. The structure of various other types of floor coverings also was changed by power weaving in the 19th century. It is well to remember, therefore, that present-day carpets with the same name as those described in this study and with a similar appearance might be quite different in construction.

Whatever their place of manufacture may have been, the carpets described as Axminster in the advertisement for a sale of "elegant and valuable household furniture" that appeared in the *New-York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury* of June 29, 1772, would have had a knotted-pile surface. The identical construction also would have characterized the "elegant Axminster carpet" listed in a public-auction sale notice in the same newspaper on October 6, 1777, as well as the "1 elegant Axminster carpet" belonging to Governor Penn that was offered for sale with his other Philadelphia-household goods in 1788. That these or any other carpets of the same name owned by Americans may have been made at Axminster in Whitty's workshop is of course possible, especially in view of the fact that at least one "name" carpet, an example of Thomas Moore's weaving, is known to have been used in this country. Describing Mr. Bingham's residence where he was invited to dinner during his Philadelphia visit in 1794, the Englishman Henry Wansey wrote: "I found a magnificent house and gardens in the best English style, with elegant and even superb furniture. The chairs of the drawing room were from Seddons's in London, of the newest taste; the back in the form of a lyre, with festoons of crimson and yellow silk. The curtains of the room a festoon of the same. The carpet one of Moore's most expensive patterns." [99]

Extant examples of Moore's as well as Whitty's and Passavant's work reflect the fashion at the time for floral and Greco-Roman motifs. In addition, these firms made carpets that resembled Oriental rugs not only in their construction but also in their appearance. In 1768 during a visit to the carpet manufactory at Moorfields, Lady Mary Coke reported that besides the "several different kinds" of carpets made by Thomas Moore, presumably of his own design, "there are other kinds that are made like the persian, look quite as well." [100] At Axminster a similar situation was observed by Samuel Curwen in 1777 when he visited Thomas Whitty's manufactory. "Here is also wrought, besides his own, of a peculiar construction, Turkey carpet, so very like in figure, color, and thickness, as not to be distinguished from the genuine article." [101] Clearly, Oriental carpets, no matter where they were made, in the 18th century were just as much a part of the current fashion picture in underfoot furnishings as were the newest creations of the day.

Fine carpets, no less than the other elegant furnishings made for the house, mirror the general stylistic trends of the 18th century. For example, the patterns of Passavant's signed and dated carpets of the late 1750's, though elaborate and somewhat heavy, are made up of scrolls, shells, foliated motifs, and flowers associated with rococo style. Carpets of a later date attributed to Axminster have delicate medallions, ribbons, and floral bouquets, baskets, and garlands arranged in restrained designs that show the influence of the Greco-Roman taste. The quintessence of the neoclassic style, however, is seen in carpets made by Thomas Moore. He is usually associated with this style because of his collaboration with the famous English architect-decorator, Robert Adam, whose designs of precisely arranged circular and octagonal paterae, bellflower swags and wreaths, with anthe-

[98] Tattersall, op. cit. (footnote 93), pp. 62–63.

[99] Henry Wansey, *The Journal of an Excursion to the United States of North America, in the Summer of 1794* (Salisbury, England: J. Easton, 1796), p. 136.

[100] Lady Mary Coke, quoted in Tattersall, op. cit. (footnote 93), p. 64.

[101] *The Journal and Letters of Samuel Curwen*, loc. cit. (footnote 95).

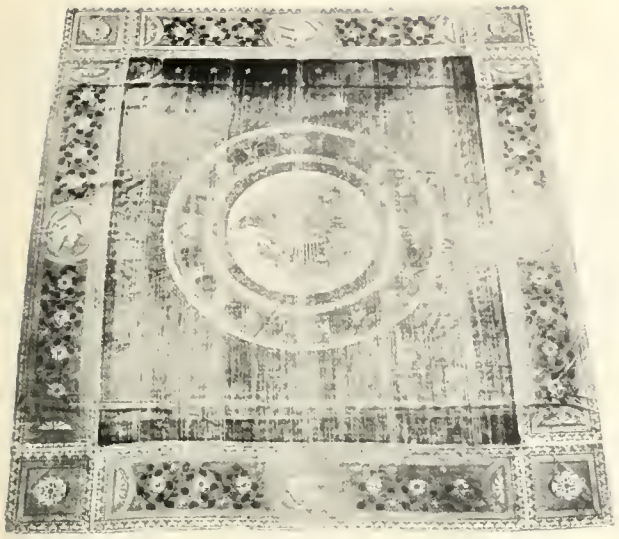

Figure 20.—Wilton-type carpet, measuring approximately 17½ by 15½ feet. The color scheme is brown, cream, orange, and gold, with red and white for the striped shield displayed on the breast of the eagle in the center medallion. (USNM 181747; Smithsonian photo 63477.)

mion, Greek-key, and guilloche borders were transformed into carpets at the Moorfields manufactory.[102]

Perhaps a neoclassic design characterized the carpet Wansey saw in Mr. Bingham's Philadelphia residence. This does not seem improbable because the carpet was described as "one of Moore's most expensive patterns." Mr. Bingham's awareness of current fashions as indicated by his choice of furniture from one of London's most stylish furniture showrooms, Seddon's, further suggests that the carpet was probably an example of the newest taste in underfoot furnishings then in vogue in England.

Had he wanted to, Mr. Bingham could have had an equally tasteful Axminster-type carpet made in Philadelphia and at the same time been in step with other eminent and style-setting Americans who were encouraging domestic manufactories. This is what the more patriotic but no less fashion-conscious George Washington had done. The floor of the large dining room in the President's Philadelphia residence was covered with a carpet made by William Peter Sprague, proprietor of the Philadelphia Carpet Manufactory. Washington's account books as well as the contemporary newspaper report mentioned here provide proof of this. Entries in the President's account books on April 1, 1791, record payments to Sprague "for a Carpet made by him for the large dining room," and again on April 24 for the same carpet "in the large dining Room." [103]

At one time the large and handsome carpet with a central motif resembling The Great Seal of the United States (fig. 20), on loan to the United States National Museum from The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of The Union, was mistakenly attributed to Sprague and identified as the one mentioned above which was made for the dining room of the President's house in Philadelphia. The carpet, however, is neither an Axminster nor an ingrain, the two kinds produced at the Philadelphia Carpet Manufactory. Although most of the pile is worn away making it very difficult to see the structure, during a recent examination of the carpet it was possible to determine that it was of a Wilton construction. Furthermore, the carpet is made up of strips sewed together as was usually the case with Wiltons in contrast to Axminsters which were usually woven in one piece, an advantage they had over most other types of floor coverings. The carpet cannot be attributed to Sprague, therefore, because of its construction. Although the origin, ownership and date are still in question, this carpet may perhaps provide a visual clue to some of the products of the Philadelphia Carpet Manufactory. According to a report in the Philadelphia *Gazette of the United States* on June 22, 1791, Sprague's "carpets made for the President, and various other persons, are master-pieces of their kind, particularly that for the Senate chamber of the United States." To prove this, a full description was given of the carpet made by Sprague for the Senate Chamber, Congress Hall, Philadelphia.

> The device wove in the last mentioned, is the *Crest* and *Armorial Achievements* appertaining to the *United States*. Thirteen Stars forming a constellation, diverging from a cloud, occupy the space under the chair of the Vice-President. The AMERICAN EAGLE is displayed in the centre, holding in his dexter talon an olive branch, in his sinister a bundle of thirteen arrows, and in his beak, a scroll it scribed with the motto, *E pluribus unum*.

[102] Thompson, op. cit. (footnote 1), figs. 15 and 17–21, pp. 213 and 215–19; *Accessions 1960 by the Winterthur Corporation*, edit. M. Elinor Betts (Winterthur, Del.: The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1960), fig. 21.

[103] Marian Sadtler Carson, "Washington's American Carpet at Mount Vernon," *Antiques* (February 1947), vol. 51, p. 119.

The whole surrounded by a chain formed of thirteen shields, emblematic of each State.

The sides are ornamented with marine and land trophies, and the corners exhibit very beautiful Cornu Copias, some filled with olive branches and flowers expressive of peace, whilst others bear fruit and grain, the emblems of plenty.

Under the arms, on the *pole* which supports the cap of liberty, is hung the *balance of Justice.*

The whole being executed in a capital stile, with rich bright colours, has a very fine effect.

The hand-tied Axminster type carpet was usually made in one piece. As already mentioned, the knotting process made the construction of a seamless carpet possible and was a major reason for employing the technique. The desire to produce a carpet with an elaborate and original design was another reason for using a hand-tied pile. And it was for just such creations as the carpet by Sprague described above that the Axminster process was best suited because hand-tying allowed complete freedom in the choice of colors, arrangement of motifs, and size of designs. Once Sprague had decided on the design for a carpet, a drawing of it was most likely prepared as a guide for the workers and was placed in front of them or slanting over their heads as they sat before the looms which were perpendicular. This was the standard loom position for making Axminster-type carpets and the one used by Thomas Whitty. Perhaps Sprague's workshop was also similar to that of Whitty's which was described in 1791 by an Englishman, E. D. Clarke, as follows:

> The work is chiefly done by women. We saw forty of these employed; the pattern lays before them, and with their fingers they weave the whole. This they execute with great quickness, and it is amusing to observe how fast the most elegant designs are traced out by the fingers of old women and children.[104]

In the same year, 1791, the Philadelphia *Gazette of the United States* on June 22, reported that Sprague's establishment "already gives employment to a number of poor women and children." According to Philadelphia directories and other sources, Sprague continued to manufacture carpets for a number of years. It is known that when Congress Hall was enlarged and the accounts settled in 1794, a payment was made to "Peter Sprague for Carpeting," supposedly for the enlarged Senate Chamber.[105] Consequently, Sprague, who had supplied the original room with one of his carpet "master-pieces," was once again responsible for its underfoot furnishings. Most of the output of the Philadelphia Carpet Manufactory, however, was undoubtedly less ambitious in size and design than these emblematic carpets. Sprague also is reported to have manufactured ingrain carpets[106] as well as, according to the Philadelphia *Gazette of the United States*, "those durable kind called *Turkey* and *Axminster*, which sell at 20 per cent. cheaper than those imported, and nearly as low as Wilton carpeting, but of double its durability." The manufacture of the Turkey type parallels the situation that existed in some of the English manufactories of knotted-pile floor coverings.

Axminster-type carpets, whether imitations of Orientals or the newest designs of the day, were one of the most elegant and expensive types of underfoot furnishings made in the 18th century. Their use by Americans attests to an awareness in the newly formed United States of the current vogue in the fashions in furnishings abroad. Their manufacture by Americans attests to the ability and desire in the young and self-confident nation to produce a type of domestic floor covering equal to and competitive with foreign examples.

NEEDLEWORK

Needlework was another method used for making carpets. Unlike the previously mentioned types of floor coverings, most made commercially, carpets in needlework were almost exclusively the work of individuals in and for their own houses. Time and patience, skill in doing cross-stitch and tent-stitch—which were the ones generally used—wool thread for embroidering, coarse canvas for a foundation, and a design were the ingredients of a needlework carpet. Work in tent- and cross-stitch had of course been done by needlewomen for some time but the exotic floral creations and imitations of Oriental carpets made in the 17th century, like the contemporaneous handiwork with a knotted pile—Turkey work—

[104] Edward Daniel Clarke, *A Tour Through the South of England, Wales, and part of Ireland, Made During the Summer of 1791* (London: Minerva Press, 1793), p. 49.

[105] Carson, op. cit. (footnote 103), p. 118.

[106] William R. Bagnall, *The Textile Industries of the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1893), vol. 1, p. 169; Philip A. Hall, *The Rug and Carpet Industry of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Hardwick and Magee Co., 1917), p. 1.

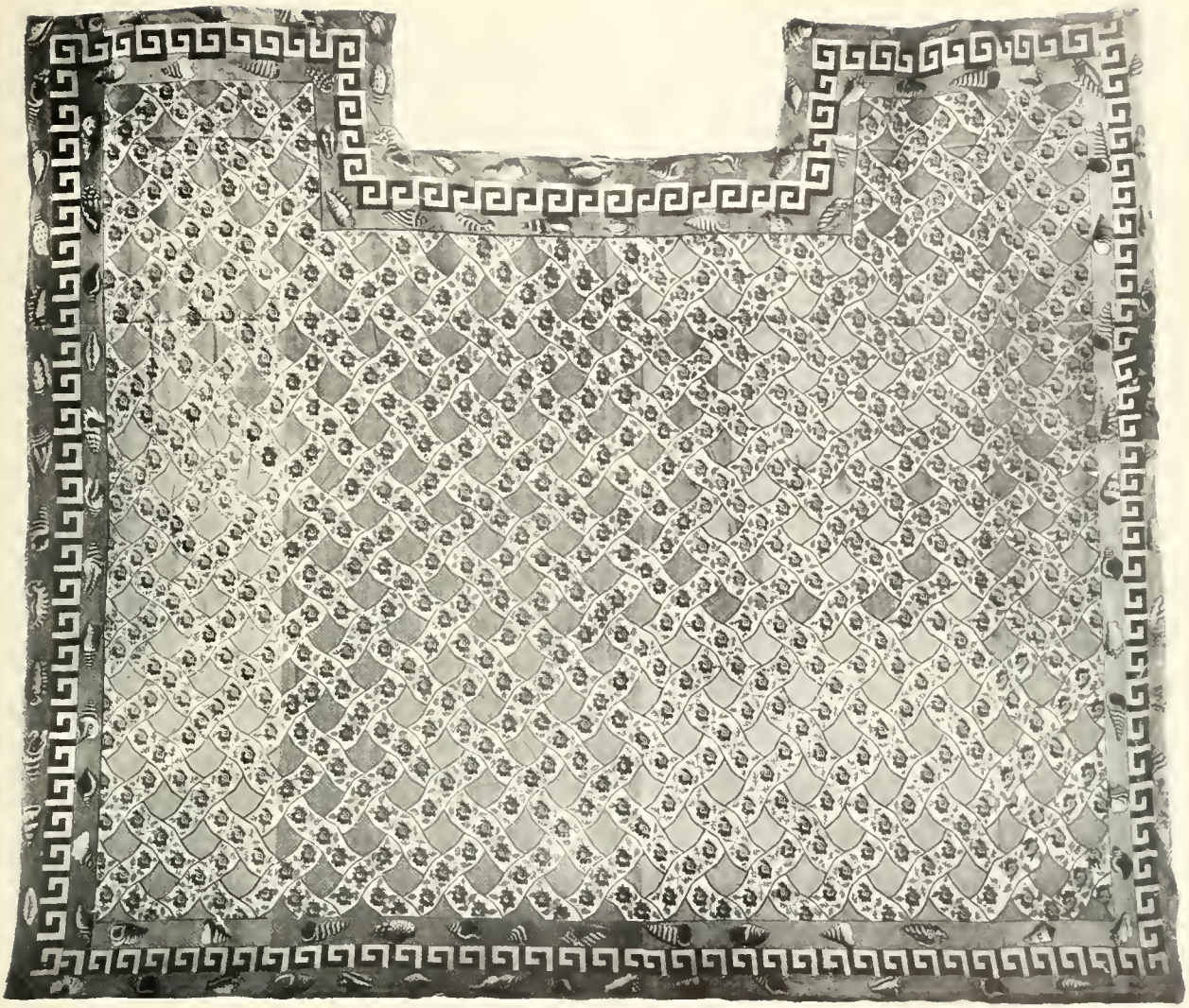

Figure 21.—Floor covering, American, early 19th century. Brown flowers bloom on the white lattice spread over the gray-green ground of this needlework wool carpet. The Greek-key border and its surrounding seashells are brown and white. The inset section was made to fit around the fireplace hearth. (*Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Miss Isabelle C. Mygatt, 1923.*)

usually was used to cover furniture rather than floors. Although some of the 18th-century floor coverings in needlework may have been copies of Orientals, most seem to have been made with naturalistic floral patterns often in rich colors against a dark ground, according to extant English examples.[107] The field and border of these carpets may be lavishly strewn with flowers or filled with a balanced arrangement of floral bouquets, garlands, and medallions. Presumably American needlewomen with the time and skill could have embroidered similarly patterned carpets. If they did or if needlework carpets were used on this side of the Atlantic in the 18th century no evidence seems to exist of it today.

There is, however, an American example made after the turn of the 19th century (fig. 21). This carpet is reported to have been made by the immediate members of Judge Pliny Moore's family for the drawing room of their house in Champlain, New York, and remained in possession of descendants until

[107] Tattersall, op. cit. (footnote 93), frontispiece and plates 26–28.

presented to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Wrought in cross-stitch on canvas or burlap strips, the carpet was begun in 1810 and completed in 1812, according to a descendant of the Moore family. This owner also stated that the "fireplace rug, six by two feet, made for [the] carpet, had [a] similar border, but narrower, [the] center design being two hounds in pursuit of deer." [108] On the carpet proper, the field is covered with flower-embellished ribbons forming a lattice design, and the border is composed of seashells and a Greek fret. As had been the custom in the 18th century, the carpet was made to fit around the fireplace, and the edges were neatly finished with bordering.

LIST

"List" is a term meaning generally a strip or band of material especially of cloth or specifically the selvage or edge part of the cloth. Consequently, a list carpet would be one made of pieces of selvage or strips of fabric. Such a floor covering may have been constructed in a number of ways, but, based on available information, it seems likely that the list carpet was the same as the so-called rag or, as it is sometimes termed, strip carpet (fig. 22). That is, a woven floor covering with the usual warp or lengthwise threads but with list or strips of cloth instead of threads used as the weft across the width of the carpet. This would appear to be the type referred to in an 1807 publication, *The Book of Trades or Library of the Useful Arts* in the section on carpets: "Another sort of carpet in use, is made of narrow slips of list sewed together; these of course are very inferior to those just described [i.e., Axminster], but they employ many women and children."

The use of women and children in this branch of carpet making, as in the knotting process of Axminsters both in England and this country, is an interesting sidelight on 18th-century labor practices in the field of floor coverings. Although carpet weaving seems to have been carried on mainly by professional weavers and was, according to the *Book of Trades*, a good business for masters and journeymen, the instances cited suggest that certain tasks were considered to be women's and children's work almost from the inception of the industry.

That underfoot furnishings made of list were available in the colonies by 1761 is shown by two advertisements of that year in the *Boston Gazette*—one on January 26 for the sale of house furnishings and the other on January 29 for imports from London and Bristol—that included list carpeting for stairs. Further verification of its use in the colonies is provided by the Sewell inventory of 1777 which had the following entry: "3 ps. List Carpetting 20/." Whether these items were commercially manufactured or homemade is of course unknown. Among the various types of underfoot furnishings used in the 18th century, however, it seems possible that list carpeting was one of the kinds that could easily have been made in the home if a loom were available. That this was the case in one community is revealed by Samuel Griswold Goodrich in his recollections of life in Ridgefield, Connecticut, in the early 19th century:

> Carpets were then only known in a few families, and were confined to the keeping-room and parlor. They were all home-made: the warp consisting of woolen yarn, and the woof [or weft] of lists and old woolen cloth, cut into strips and sewed together at the ends.[109]

Further evidence suggesting that list floor coverings were a product of the home appears in *Annals of Philadelphia*. According to this compilation of recollections, events, and extant records, "the manufacture of carpet was not introduced into this country, with the exception of the home-made rag-carpet, until some time after the Revolutionary War." [110]

Just how prevalent list carpeting was in the 18th century, however, is difficult to determine. The fact that it was of simple construction, might be made at home, and utilized materials commonly at hand, such as rags or narrow strips of fabric, would seem to favor fairly widespread use. Nevertheless, the available information suggests the contrary, since there is scant mention of list carpeting by name in the contemporary sources studied. Consequently, until additional information is forthcoming, little more can be said about list carpeting than that it was one type of underfoot furnishing that was available and used in 18th-century America.

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[108] Cornelia Bateman Faraday, *European and American Carpets and Rugs* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: The Dean-Hicks Co., 1929), pp. 278–79.

[109] Samuel Griswold Goodrich, *Recollections of a Life Time or Men and Things I Have Seen* (New York: Miller, Orton and Mulligan, 1856), vol. 1, pp. 74–75.

[110] John F. Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia*, edit. Willis P. Hazard (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Edwin S. Stuart, 1898), vol. 3, p. 125.

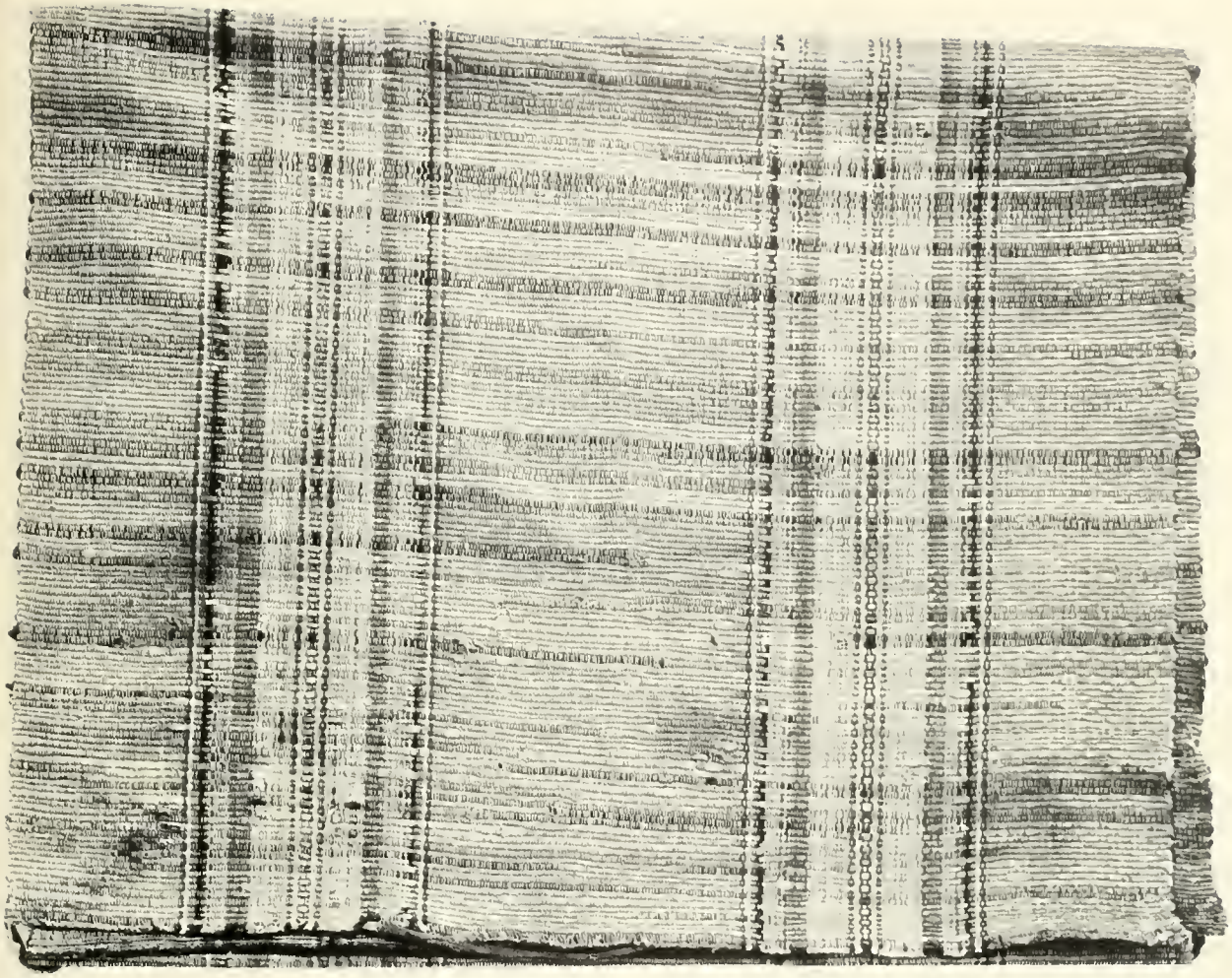

Figure 22.—Floor covering, American, early 20th century. This piece of list carpeting is 3 feet wide and 10 feet long. Its warp is brown, with the two vertical stripes of multicolor yarns. The weft is tan and brown strips of cotton cloth. It is perhaps similar in appearance to the ordinary list carpeting of the 18th century. (USNM 393800; Smithsonian photo 48699.)

VENETIAN

Venetian carpeting is perhaps more rightly considered a 19th- rather than an 18th-century floor covering since it does not seem to have appeared here much before 1800. According to the sources studied, Andrew S. Norwood was one of the first persons to offer it to American shoppers. In 1799, when he opened his "Carpet Store," Norwood announced in the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser* that his merchandise included Venetian carpeting "1–2 yd, 3–4 and 7–8" yards wide. Newspaper advertisements dating after the turn of the century, such as those in the *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser* of October 18, 1805, and January 8, 1808, indicate that Venetian carpeting was available in "1–2 5–8 3–4 & 4–4" yard widths.

Just where or why the carpeting received its name is puzzling. That the carpeting may have originated or currently been made in Venice, on the one hand, seems doubtful in view of the statement in Webster's *An Encyclopaedia of Domestic Economy* that "it is not known that what we call Venetian carpeting was ever made in Venice." On the other hand, however, Thomas Sheraton in his *Cabinet Dictionary* says that Venetian carpet was one of the "sorts, which have their names from the places where they are manufactured." As to its appearance, however, there is less doubt. "Venetian carpet" is described

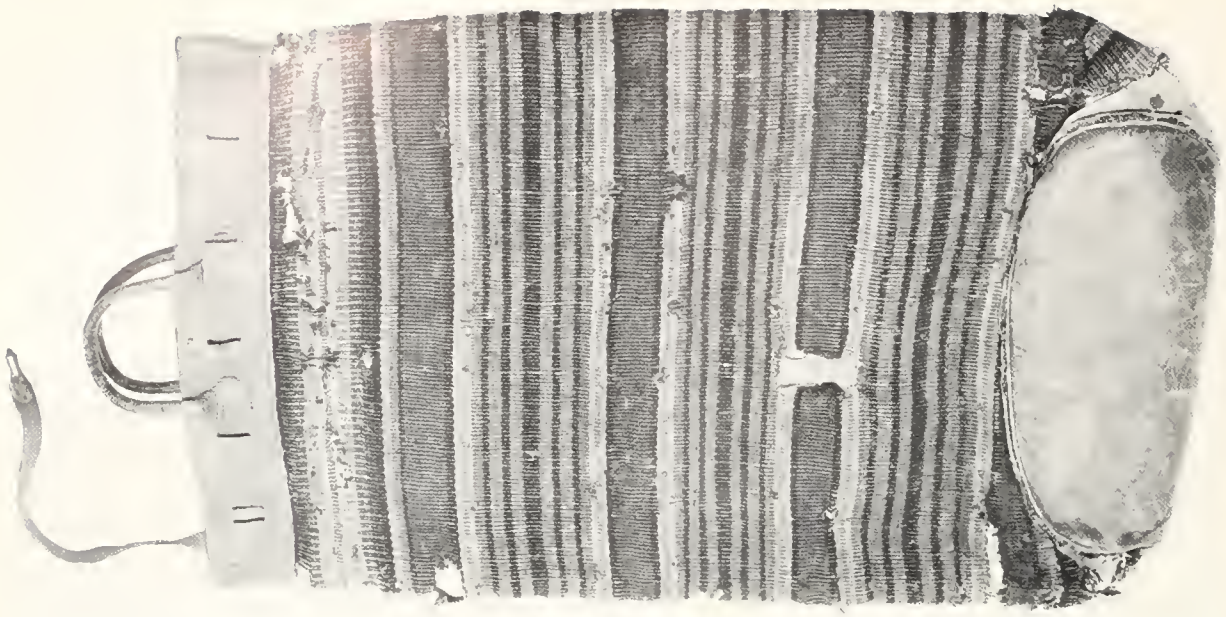

Figure 23.—Venetian carpeting, leather-trimmed mail sack, American, early 19th century. The distinctive Venetian carpeting sold for covering floors was so durable that it was also used for mail sacks such as this one used on the route opened in 1815 from Rochester to Canandaigua, New York. The fabric is approximately 22 inches wide; the multicolored stripes are formed by the warp. (In the collection of the Rochester Historical Society; Smithsonian photo P-174.)

in Sheraton's *Dictionary* as "generally striped" (fig. 23). It also is reported to have been made in checks as well as simple stripes and to have been used mainly for stairs and passages in the 19th century.[111]

In addition to the already available, moderately priced, nonpile carpeting, ingrain, the appearance of Venetian carpeting on the American market in the late 18th century forecast the increasing use of floor coverings and the developments in techniques and machinery for their manufacture that were to occur in the early decades of the 19th century.

SAND

Sand, too, served as an underfoot furnishing in 18th-century American houses. Among the reminiscences that were collected and recorded by John F. Watson in his book *Annals of Philadelphia* was one of a lady who spoke of "things as they were before the war of Independence." In reference to households at that time, she recalled that although a carpet was sometimes seen, "a white floor sprinkled with clean white sand, large tables and heavy high back chairs of walnut or mahogany, decorated a parlour genteelly enough for any body."[112] As to the appearance and care of this most movable kind of floor covering, and incidentally the social and economic status of the people who used it, Watson wrote:

> Turkey carpets were spoken of, and only to be seen upon the floors of the first families for wealth. Parlour floors of very respectable people in business used to be "swept and garnished" every morning with sand sifted through a "sand sieve," and sometimes smoothed with a hair broom, into quaint circles and fancy wreaths, agreeably to the "genius for drawing" possessed by the chambermaid.[113]

Speaking of East Hampton, Long Island, about 1800, Lyman Beecher recalled that the houses there "all had sanded floors." It also has been reported that sand was used in midwestern log cabins as well as in the homes of the eastern countryside well into the 19th century, and was spread on dirt floors for greater cleanliness, where it acted as an absorbent for boot

[111] Barbara Morris, "Textiles," *The Early Victorian Period, 1830–1860*, edit. Ralph Edwards and L. G. G. Ramsey ("The Connoisseur Period Guides"; New York: Reynal and Co., 1958), p. 125.

[112] Watson, op. cit. (footnote 110), vol. 1, p. 205.

[113] Ibid., vol. 2, p 550.

tracks and aided in sweeping. Often it was spread in decorative designs, the favored patterns being herringbone and swirled dots.[114] Presumably, sand was inexpensive and easy to obtain. In Philadelphia, according to Watson, at the time when white sand for floors was "an important article of consumption, the old sand man, for the northern part of the city, was looked for the same as the milkman."[115]

Recollections, of course, must be used with caution since an individual's remembrance of events and objects often is dimmed by the passage of time. There need be little doubt, however, that either Watson or the people whose reminiscences he recorded had been mistaken in regard to the use of sand as a floor covering. Their statements are verified by Abbé Claude Robin who traveled in this country in 1781. This Frenchman remarked that in the houses of wealthy Americans "their floors are covered with handsome carpets, or painted cloths, but others sprinkle them with fine sand."[116] No matter how attractive a pattern the 18th-century housewife may have created or how fine and white the sand, a floor covered with a layer of this substance certainly would have had an untidy appearance once walked upon, and in most households must have been a messy business indeed. Nevertheless, it was used, and, if considered in terms of 18th-century conditions when pathways, sidewalks, lanes, and roads often consisted of little more than mud and slush, sand might well have been a more utilitarian and satisfactory form of floor covering than a woven carpet or painted floorcloth.

Sale of Floor Coverings

The sale of floor coverings in 18th-century America was common to auctioneers, painters, shopkeepers, and upholsterers, although it was an adjunct to their principal occupations of, respectively, conducting public sales, furnishing painting supplies and skills, providing a general selection of goods, and supplying interior fittings and furnishings.

Upholsterers form the largest portion of this group who combined their craft with the sale of floor coverings. They seem to be the principal retailers of woven-pile and pileless carpets and carpeting at this time. For example, John Mason's advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle* of October 28, 1771, stated that, besides selling Wilton carpeting and sundry other items, "The said Mason carries on the Upholstery Business, in all its branches." Francis Partrige, an upholsterer "in Old-Town, Baltimore," announced in the *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser* on September 19, 1783, that he made "Carpets for Rooms," and William Mooney, the proprietor of a "Furniture Ware-House" according to the *New-York Journal* of October 27, 1785, was another upholsterer who sold floor coverings. Norwood and Kant, a partnership of New York upholsterers, also combined their trade with the manufacture and sale of underfoot furnishings according to an advertisement in *The Diary; or Evening Register* of September 16, 1794.

The dual role of upholsterer and carpet salesman was considered a satisfactory one by some men even when the locality of their business was not so satisfactory. This may explain why in 1799, C. Alder, associated with Philadelphia in prior newspaper notices, advertised in the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser* of May 13 as "upholsterer, Paper Hanger" and retailer of "a great variety of . . . Carpeting" at No. 67 Maiden Lane, New York City. Although Alder continued to combine his craft skills with the sale of floor coverings, he apparently had left Philadelphia where, according to the *Federal Gazette* on November 16 of that year, another upholsterer was supplying the city's floor-covering needs in the form of "brass and iron rods and staples for stairs" in addition to the usual selection of carpets and carpeting.

Painters were another craft group often associated with underfoot furnishings. They usually applied their skills to the manufacture and sale of painted floorcloths as well as to painting coaches, houses, and signs.

Shopkeepers also sold coverings for floors along with a general miscellany of merchandise. An advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* of October 15, 1767, announced the sale of "all sorts of dry goods," along with currants, figs, and almonds as well as "sugars of all sorts, carpets and carpeting of all sizes." Carpeting also was found among the general assortment of goods "imported by the last arrival from London" that Andrew Van Tuyl and Son listed in the *Daily Advertiser* of April 6, 1796, for sale in their New York store. In addition, floor coverings also could be obtained

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[114] Esther Stevens Fraser, "Some Colonial and Early American Decorative Floors," *Antiques* (April 1931), vol. 19, p. 296.

[115] Watson, op. cit. (footnote 110), vol. 2, p. 550.

[116] Claude Robin, *New Travels Through North America*, [trans. Philip Freneau] (Philadelphia: Robert Bell, 1783), p. 13.

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Assembly at Wanstead House
by William Hogarth, about 1730
(*Courtesy of Philadelphia Museum of Art, John Howard McFadden Collection.*)

Figure 24.—The elaborate carpet in the foreground of this painting is ornamented with floral garlands on a brown ground with blue accents.

directly from England; this method was often used by Virginians. In 1773 the London firm of John Norton and Sons, who had attended to the floor-covering needs of Martha Jacquelin, Mann Page, and Thomas Nelson, were called upon to provide carpeting for Lord Dunmore, Governor of Virginia. The "Invoice of Several things for his Lordship and his familys use" which the Norton merchants received included "1 piece Carpeting." [117]

[117] Letter to John Norton, Esq., London, from James Minzies enclosing a letter from Lord Dunmore, Williamsburg, June 12, 1773. In *John Norton and Sons*, op. cit. (footnote 24), pp. 328 and 330.

Auctioneers were concerned with the buying and selling of floor coverings, too. Advertisements for public vendues in the *Boston Gazette* mentioned "a quantity of stout Carpeting both for Floors and Stairs" on December 6, 1762, and "articles of Household Furniture (almost new)" including "Carpets" on November 26, 1764. In the south as in the north, good buys in floor coverings were to be found at the auctions. "Two large new Carpets of the best Kind" were listed with other household and kitchen furniture "To be Sold by Joseph Kidd, Auctioneer . . . in the City of Williamsburg," according to the *Virginia Gazette* of July 25, 1771. In New York, "Sales by Auction" that included "elegant carpets" were

advertised in the *Royal Gazette* on June 3, 1780. In Philadelphia, a "public vendue" announced in the *Pennsylvania Packet* of September 28, 1784, listed "stair carpeting" among "a variety of Household Furniture" to be sold "on Tuesday next."

Then, in the final year of the 18th century, a new venture in retailing was launched. On May 22 of that year the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser* carried the following announcement which read in part:

> Carpet Store. A. S. Norwood, impressed with a deep sense of gratitude for the many favours he has received in the line of Upholsterer, takes this method to inform his friends and the public in general, that he has now opened a Carpet Store, at No. 127 William Street, where he has just received from some of the first manufactories in Europe, an assortment of carpets and carpeting.

Floor coverings had become a specialized business. The future development of the carpet industry in this country, with its great growth of manufactories beginning in the 1830s and the concurrent widespread use of floor coverings in 19th-century American houses, was foreshadowed by the appearance of this advertisement in 1799 announcing the establishment of a "Carpet Store."

Miscellaneous Uses

Floor carpets and carpeting, as pointed out, were uncommon in terms of household furnishings generally in 18th-century America. Stairs, nevertheless, were sometimes carpeted. The use of stair carpeting in this country seems to date from the middle of the 18th century. The practice was being followed in the 1750s by such wealthy Boston residents as Sir Charles Henry Frankland for he noted in his journal on January 4, 1757: "Gave manufacturer of stair carpet £5."[118]

Since the carpet presumably was made locally it might have been either a woven one, such as ingrain, or a floorcloth. Or perhaps Frankland's stair carpet was list, another type of carpeting that was manufactured domestically as well as being imported, and also was used on stairs and available in Boston as the advertisements of 1761 in the *Boston Gazette* reveal. In the same newspaper on January 26 and again on December 6 of the following year, "a quantity of stout Carpeting both for Floors and Stairs" was advertised for sale. "Hair Cloth for Stairs and Passages" is reported to have been available in 1762 in New York. This, too, probably provided a stout covering for stairs if, as the name suggests, it resembled the sturdy horsehair fabric used for upholstery. In Baltimore, "painted Oil Cloths for . . . Stairs, of various Sizes and Patterns" could be obtained in 1764 according to the August 2 issue of the *Maryland Gazette*, and "staircloth, with iron rods and holdfasts" were among the items "To be Sold, at Public Vendue" in 1777 according to the June 24 issue of the *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Daily Advertiser*.

In Philadelphia stairs were carpeted, too. According to the *Pennsylvania Packet* of September 28, 1784, "stair carpeting" was among "a variety of Household Furniture" that was advertised to be sold at auction. Another notice appearing four years later reveals that there had been stair and entry carpeting in the Chestnut Street house of John Penn, Senior. And at the Philadelphia residence of President Washington on High Street, the stairs also were carpeted when an Englishman, Thomas Twining, called upon the General and his wife in 1795. Of this occasion Twining wrote: "I was conducted up a neat but rather narrow staircase, carpeted in the middle, and was shown into a middling-sized well-furnished drawing-room on the left of the passage. Nearly opposite the door was the fireplace, with a wood-fire in it. The floor was carpeted."[119]

Wilton was another kind of carpeting that was available in this country for use on stairs, according to the *Boston News-Letter* of May 23, 1771. That it was used for this purpose by Bostonians is revealed by the Gould inventory of 1777. "1 Wilton Carpet 40/ [and] 19 yds. Do. Stair Carpet 60/" are listed among the contents of the front chamber of the merchant's house. There also was "1 Stair Carpet 18/" in the chamber entry. Information about the dimensions of such floor coverings is provided by Sheraton's 1803 publication, *The Cabinet Dictionary*. According to the section on carpets: "stair carpets are, half yard, half ell [or 22½ inches], and three quarters wide."

One method for holding in place the carpeting running up the middle of the staircase was to lay

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[118] Elias Nason, *Sir Charles Henry Frankland, Baronet, or Boston in the Colonial Times* (Albany, N.Y.: J. Munsell, 1865), p. 76.

[119] *Travels in America 100 Years Ago. Being Notes and Reminiscences by Thomas Twining* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publs., 1894), p. 128.

rods of iron or brass over the carpeting, presumably at the back of each tread. Apparently this method was or had been used in the White House because Jefferson's inventory of 1809 listed among the contents of the "Store Room in the Garret . . . 32 Brass Carpet rods." When properly in place on top of the stair carpeting, the rods would be secured to the stair with some type of fastener. "Holdfasts" were used for this purpose in 1777 in Baltimore, while "brass and iron rods and staples for stairs" were available for the same use in Philadelphia according to the *Federal Gazette* of November 16, 1799. This was the same method used at Aaron Burr's residence in New York City. According to the 1797 inventory, the staircase had "Stair carpetting Brass Rods and Staples."

Entries and passages were on occasion carpeted in the 18th century, too, as a number of references have already indicated. Newspaper advertisements reveal that in New York and Baltimore houses, passages could have been covered with, respectively, "Hair Cloth" in 1763, "painted Oil Cloths . . . of various Sizes and Patterns" in 1764, or "Fancy Pattern-Cloths" in 1792. Evidence that some Philadelphia houses also had carpeted passages as well as stairways is provided by Brissot de Warville, whose opinions on the use of underfoot furnishings in this country already have been noted. This Frenchman further showed where his sympathies lay on this subject and at the same time provided another glimpse of 18th-century floor-covering customs in America when he observed in 1788:

> The Quakers have likewise carpets; but the rigorous ones blame this practice. They mentioned to me an instance of a Quaker from Carolina, who, going to dine with one of the most opulent at Philadelphia, was offended at finding the passage from the door to the staircase covered with a carpet, and would not enter the house; he said he never dined in a house where there was luxury; and that it was better to clothe the poor, than to clothe the earth.[120]

The residence of John Penn, Senior, was another household in Philadelphia where the passage was carpeted. "Entry carpeting" was included with other furnishings from the house that were to be sold at auction in 1788. In the late 18th century "striped Brussels carpeting," or "Patent Oil Floor Cloths," which were sold specifically for entries, might have been the choice of New York shoppers. Earlier in the century floorcloths had been used in the same way by New Yorkers. The Schuyler's house, the "Flats," had an oilcloth in the lobby. Whether called a lobby, passage, or entry, the area adjacent to the front door in some 18th-century American households was covered with one type or another of floor covering.

Bedsides in some households were another place where carpets or strips of carpeting were used. For example, the Sewell inventory of 1777, listed "1 large Turkey Carpet, & Strip for Bedside." An idea as to how such bedside strips may have been used is provided by Mrs. Delany, an English gentlewoman whose correspondence abounds with details of domestic life and manners. In a letter of 1752, she explains that her "candlelight work, is finishing a carpet in double-cross-stitch, on very coarse canvass, to go round my bed."[121] By creating a frame around the bed, carpeting strips used in this way would have been decorative as well as functional. This same arrangement apparently was used at Lansdowne, Governor John Penn's country house outside of Philadelphia, because in the south chamber there was "A Carpet round the bed," according to an inventory taken after Penn's death in 1795. In addition, the north chamber at Lansdowne contained "2 bedside Carpets" and the southwest chamber one.[122] Penn also had bedside carpets at his townhouse. Two new bedside carpets were part of his furnishings that were "exposed to sale" at the Chestnut Street residence in 1788. Whether such unidentified items of underfoot furnishings as the "Chamber Carpet in 3 pieces 40/" listed in the Dorrington inventory of 1776, or the "3 Small Pieces of Carpeting" in another Boston inventory, that of Mrs. Mary Morehead recorded in 1777, served as bedside or "round the bed" carpets is not known.[123] Presumably the "Small Carpet" listed in the Dr. Pemberton inventory of 1777 was used by the side of the "Field Bedstead" which appeared as the inventory entry

[120] Brissot de Warville, loc. cit. (footnote 65).

[121] Letter from Mrs. Delany, Delville, Ireland, to Mrs. Dewes, England, Nov. 25, 1752. In *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany*, edit. Lady Llanover (London: Richard Bentley, 1861), vol. 3, p. 176.

[122] Marie G. Kimball, "The Furnishings of Lansdowne, Governor Penn's Country Estate," *Antiques* (June 1931), vol. 19, p. 455.

[123] Inventory of Mrs. Mary Morehead, Jan. 18, 1777. In Suffolk Probate Books, vol. 75, pp. 391–93.

FAMILY AT TEA
Dutch, mid-18th century
(*Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg.*)

Figure 25.—The two floor coverings in this watercolor are a very large Oriental carpet and, on top of it, a small striped carpet with fringed ends. For this family scene, the chairs have been moved from their usual location against the wall to in front of the fireplace where a table with the tea equipage has been placed.

immediately prior to it. Bedside carpets may even have been made of straw; but whatever the material, they served a useful purpose in 18th-century American houses where, as Moreau de Saint Méry reported, "rooms are drafty."

Hearths were seldom associated with floor coverings in this country during the 18th century. According to the sources studied, fireplace or hearthrugs seem not to have appeared on the American market much before 1799. In that year "an assortment of hearth Rugs" was offered for sale by Andrew S. Norwood, according to an advertisement in the *New-York Gazette and General Advertiser* of May 22. Further evidence associating hearthrugs with the 19th century is provided by Jefferson's inventory of the Presidential Mansion taken in 1809. In the President's sitting room there was "1 elegant Brussels carpet and a fire rug." This type of underfoot furnishing apparently was used in Europe in the 18th century because what seems to be a hearthrug appears in a Dutch watercolor of the mid-18th century (fig. 25). A small, horizontally striped carpet, possibly of list, though more likely woven of wool, is shown placed in front of the fireplace and on top of a room-size Oriental. Here the family gathered for tea, and to have their portrait painted. The facts that the fire-

place seems devoid of equipment and that the view out the window reflected in the overmantel mirror is of leafy foliage suggest that it is summer when, paradoxically, a hearthrug would serve little purpose. It is of course possible that the striped carpet is not a hearthrug but rather a carpet reserved for use under the table as were some of the previously mentioned floorcloths. Or, if it is a hearthrug, as seems a likely explanation based on its size, shape, and placement adjacent to the fireplace, the striped carpet may have remained in place both summer and winter.

According to pictorial materials dating from the early 19th century, hearthrugs seem generally to have been of rectangular shape. Their length was usually a bit more than that of the mantel or outer frame of the fireplace while the width was one-third or more but probably less than one-half the length of the rug. The hearthrug mentioned in connection with the Moore carpet of needlework would seem to confirm this, for it was stated to be six by two feet.

The use of hearthrugs in 18th-century American houses must for the time being, however, remain as problematical as the use of needlework carpets on this side of the Atlantic.

Maintenance and Upkeep

Maintenance and upkeep, of course, were factors to be considered by 18th-century carpet owners. Help in this matter could be obtained by consulting one of the housekeeping manuals of the day. *The Toilet of Flora*, published in London in 1775, gave the following instructions for cleaning Turkey carpets.

> To revive the colour of a Turkey Carpet, beat it well with a stick, till the dust is all got out, then with Lemon Juice or Sorrel Juice take out the spots of ink, if the carpet is stained with any, wash it in cold Water, and afterwards shake out all the Water from the threads of the carpet, and when it is thoroughly dry, rub it all over with the Crumb of an hot White Loaf, and if the weather is very fine, hang it out in the open air a night or two.

Clearly carpet cleaning was an arduous chore. Fortunately, help also was available from another source. Professional cleaners such as "Baker and Yearsley, Silk Dyers and Scowerers from London," who advertised in the *New-York Gazette and the Weekly Mercury* on December 23, 1771, offered to "clean Turkey and wilton carpets, and make the colour quite fresh."

Carpets obviously were subject to wear and tear from being walked upon. Unnecessary abuse, however, could be alleviated, at least from one source, as indicated by the following advertisement that appeared in the New York *Mercantile Advertiser* on December 7, 1799:

> William Carver, Horse Farrier and Shoeing Smith . . . makes patent springs for parlour doors which will cause the doors to clear, the carpets, and when shut prevent air drawing under the door into the room . . . it is presumed no gentlemen will be without them that have valuable carpets on the floors, as they are far preferable to any thing offered of the kind in this country. They are not to be perceived when fixed to the doors. He will wait on the gentlemen to shew the springs if required.

Carpet care required womanly understanding, too. The feminine view is best expressed by Abigail Adams. No doubt Americans fortunate enough to have floor coverings in their houses felt concern similar to that expressed by Mrs. Adams in reference to the carpets in her home in Quincy. On October 31, 1797, while en route to join the President in Philadelphia, she wrote to her sister: "I will thank you to go to our House and see that particular attention is paid the Carpets. I fear they will suffer."[124] That the task was undertaken and the carpets as well as other domestic affairs were being looked after is evident from another letter of the same year addressed to her sister and dated December 26, Philadelphia, in which Mrs. Adams wrote: "I thank you for the care of my Bacon & carpets. I had much rather they should be down on your floor than not."[125] It is interesting to note that Mrs. Adams did not choose to store the carpets. Perhaps she felt that they would suffer as much from disuse as use, or perhaps she wanted to share with her sister the nicety of having a carpet underfoot.

Selection of Floor Coverings

When selecting floor coverings, the decor of the room in which the carpet was to be used as well as the size of the carpet and its quality and color were all matters of concern to the 18th-century shopper. George Washington was no exception. As a consumer, he, too, considered details of this sort in the selection of underfoot furnishings. Writing from Philadelphia

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[124] Letter from Mrs. Abigail Adams, East Chester, N.Y., to Mrs. Mary Cranch, Braintree, Mass., Oct. 31, 1797. In *New Letters of Abigail Adams*, op. cit. (footnote 51), p. 110.

[125] Letter from Mrs. Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, to Mrs. Mary Cranch, Braintree, Mass., Dec. 26, 1797. Ibid., p. 119.

THE DUNLAP FAMILY. THE ARTIST SHOWING A PICTURE FROM "HAMLET" TO HIS PARENTS
by William Dunlap, about 1788
(*Courtesy of The New-York Historical Society, New York City.*)

Figure 26.—The bordered floor covering seen here extends from wall to wall. It has a soft gray-green background covered with red and white blossoms and dark-green leaves.

on November 20, 1796, the President requested the following information from William Pearce, his plantation manager at Mount Vernon: "Let me know the size of the blue Parlour, that is the length and breadth of it, and how far it is from the hearth on each side to the sides of the Room that the size of the hearth may be taken out, the Carpet as it now is with the [mutilated]. The dimensions of the 4 sides must be sent also." [126]

[126] Letter from George Washington, Philadelphia, to William Pearce, Mount Vernon, Nov. 20, 1796. In *The Writings of George Washington*, op. cit. (footnote 55), vol. 35, p. 287.

Early in the following year Washington once more turned his attention to floor coverings for the blue parlor. Returning to Mount Vernon after serving his country as President for two terms, Washington wrote the following from the "Head of the Elk" River, Maryland, on March 10, 1797, to his secretary, Tobias Lear, who was still in Philadelphia: "[If] you have means to accomplish it, let me request you to provide for me as usual *new* Carpeting as will cover the floor of my blue Parlour. That it may accord with the furniture it ought to have a good deal of blue in it; and if Wilton is not much dearer than Scotch Carpeting, I

would prefer the former." [127]

At the end of the letter, Washington added: "P.S. The parlour is about 18 foot Square, a suitable border if to be had, should accompany the Carpeting." A few days later, Washington again wrote to Lear about the carpet. This letter was dated March 12, 1797, Baltimore, and read in part:

> In my last from Elkton I mentioned the want of a Carpet for my parlour at Mount Vernon; and observed that as the furniture was blue, the ground or principal flowers in it ought to be blue also; and that if Wilton Carpeting was not much dearer than Scotch I should prefer it. Mrs. Washington says there is a kind different from both much in use (Russia) if not dearer or but little more so than the former I would have it got. The Room is about 18 feet Square, and the Carpet should have a suitable border if to be had.[128]

Just what type of floor covering Mrs. Washington meant by "Russia" is uncertain, although it apparently was held in higher regard than Wilton which in turn was considered to be better than Scotch carpeting.[129] It does seem likely, however, from Washington's reference to flowers in connection with the color of the floor covering that, as previously suggested, Scotch as well as Wilton carpets were available with floral patterns. And the request for a suitable border to accompany the carpeting points to the practice at the time, perhaps for esthetic as well as for practical reasons, of finishing the edges of a carpet by attaching a border. A border-trimmed carpet of the type Washington may have had in mind is depicted in the portrait *The Dunlap Family* (fig. 26), painted about 1788 by William Dunlap. Although neither the flowers nor the "ground" are blue, the colors of the carpet, which are a soft gray green for the background, red and white for the flowers, and dark green for the leaf sprays, would have pleased Washington as would the pattern because both seem to match the description given in the following letter written in New York on February 10, 1790, by Tobias Lear to Clement Biddle of Philadelphia:

> The President wishes to get a Carpet of the best kind for a Room 32 feet by 22. A Pea Green Ground, with white or light flowers or spots would suit the furniture of the Room, and Carpet as the former would be made to fit the Room exactly when it would be difficult to find one of the latter of the precise size; the length of the Room, *32 feet*, is the full extent, but at each end there is a fireplace which projects into the room perhaps 3½ or 4 feet including Hearths. We can get no Carpet in New York to suit the Room, nor Carpeting of the best kind. Scotch Carpeting is almost the only kind to be found here. If you would be so good as to inform me if anything of the above description can be had in Philadelphia you will oblige me. The price is also necessary to be known.[130]

A carpet was obtained in New York after all, because Lear wrote to Biddle on March 5, 1790: "We are furnished with a Carpet for the Room which I had described to you; but are therefore no less obliged to you for the trouble you have had in making inquires respecting it." [131] The carpet was, without doubt, for use in the Presidential Mansion in New York and, as with the one Washington later ordered for Mount Vernon, its predominant color was to be the same as that of the "furniture," that is the upholstery and draperies.

There is no mention of bordering in connection with this carpet, although its use in America does date earlier in the 18th century. Benjamin Franklin, writing from London in 1758 to his wife in Philadelphia, mentioned it as well as explaining how to transform his purchase of carpeting into a carpet. "In the great Case, besides the little Box, is contain'd some Carpeting for a best Room Floor. There is enough for one large or two small ones, it is to be sow'd together, the Edges being first fell'd down, and Care taken to make the Figures meet exactly: there is Bordering for the same. This was my Fancy." [132]

Whether this carpeting was later used in Franklin's new house and was among the floor coverings mentioned by Mrs. Franklin in her letter of 1765,

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[127] Letter from George Washington, Head of Elk, Maryland, to Tobias Lear, Philadelphia, Mar. 10, 1797. Ibid., vol. 37, pp. 577–78.

[128] Letter from George Washington, Baltimore, to Tobias Lear, Philadelphia, Mar. 12, 1797. Ibid., vol. 37, p. 579.

[129] Mr. Charles F. Hummel of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware, suggests that the "Russia" carpet Mrs. Washington refers to may have been similar to one in the Winterthur Museum (G59.159) which is a pileless type but rather like needlework than ingrain or Scotch in quality and has a geometric design.

[130] Letter from Tobias Lear, New York, to Clement Biddle, Philadelphia, Feb. 10, 1790. In *The Writings of George Washington*, op. cit. (footnote 55), vol. 31, pp. 8–9.

[131] Letter from Tobias Lear, New York, to Clement Biddle, Philadelphia, March 5, 1790. Ibid., vol. 31, p. 18.

[132] Letter from Benjamin Franklin, London, to Mrs. Deborah Franklin, Philadelphia, Feb. 19, 1758. In *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, op. cit. (footnote 16), vol. 3, p. 433.

SAMUEL GRIFFIN
American, about 1809

(*Courtesy of The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., from the Collection of American Primitive Paintings given by Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch.*)

Figure 27.—The floor covering in the parlor depicted in this portrait is a creamy yellow with green and pink motifs, neatly edged with a floral border. The chair and sofa are upholstered in black. The walls are bright green outlined with a floral border of blue, pink, red, and white motifs on a gray background.

previously cited, is not known. It is clear, however, that Franklin intended the carpet to be edged with a border in accordance with the prevailing mode. The same ingredients for fashionable floors also were available in Philadelphia. Among the English imports offered for sale in the *Pennsylvania Packet* of November 1, 1773, were "a beautiful piece of floor carpeting, with border suitable." This practice of bordering carpets was still in fashion in 1803 when Thomas Sheraton's *The Cabinet Dictionary* was published in London. In the section on carpets, the author wrote: "to most of the best kind of carpets, there are suitable borders in narrow widths." Directions for cutting, measuring, and fitting carpets were also provided by Sheraton in *The Cabinet Dictionary*. They reveal that the problem of matching carpeting patterns, recognized by the Dublin Society in 1757 and noted by Franklin in 1758, was still unsolved approximately half a century later when *The Dictionary* was published in 1803. Sheraton's directions were:

> In cutting out carpets, the upholsterers clear the room of all the furniture, and having caused it to be dusted out, they proceed to line out the border with a chalk line, and marking the mitres correctly in the angles of the room, and round the fire-place in particular, as in this part any defects are most noticeable. They then proceed to cut the mitres of the carpet border, beginning at the fire-place, and endeavouring, as correctly as possible, to match the pattern at each mitre: and in order to do this, they must sometimes cut more or less of the border to waste. In this manner they proceed, tacking it down, in a temporary manner, as they go on. They then take a length of the body carpet, and tacking it up to the border at one end, they take the strainer, and draw it to the other, and tack it again, taking care, as they go on, to match the pattern, which sometimes varies in the whole length, for which there is no remedy, but by changing the lengths in such a manner as to bring them tolerably near in matching. Lastly, if the widths do not answer in number, it then becomes necessary to draw them in at that side of the room where it is least seen; and this must be done so as to make the contracted widths match, that there may be nothing offensive in the appearance of the whole. That they may not misplace any of the lengths or parts of the border, they take sealing thread, and tack them together, where they think it necessary, in which state they are taken to the shop and completed.
>
> If a carpet be cut out at home, a plan of the room must be accurately taken on paper, with all the sizes of breaks, door ways, and windows, &c. which must be transferred to some convenient room at home, by a chalk line and square, and then marking off the border, and proceeding as before described.
>
> In laying down a carpet, they generally begin with the fire-place first, and having tacked and secured this, they strain here and there, so as to bring it gradually too, till they get the whole strained close round the room.

That a handsome floor covering could be obtained, despite the problem of matching carpeting patterns, is indicated by the patterned or figured carpet with a border seen, faintly to be sure, in the portrait *Samuel Griffin*, painted about 1809 (fig. 27). The carpet, extending from wall to wall, was cut to fit around the hearth and then neatly edged with a floral border.

This carpet with its pattern of pink and green blossoms scattered on a creamy-yellow ground, however, is not "in accord with the furniture" but instead harmonizes with the bright apple-green walls and the painted or wallpaper border of floral pattern in blue, pink, red, and white on gray. This would seem to indicate the existence of an alternate plan to that noted in Washington's correspondence for choosing the color of a carpet. The scheme used by Samuel Griffin appears to have been favored by the Dunlaps, too, insofar as the grayish walls shown in their portrait (fig. 26), rather than the furniture which is upholstered in a brown damask-like fabric, harmonize with the greenish-gray carpet. In contrast, Chief Justice and Mrs. Oliver Ellsworth picked their carpet to "suit the furniture" for the chairs seen in the Ellsworth's portrait (fig. 1), are upholstered in red and edged with red fringe and red is the predominant color of the carpet. This color plan is duplicated in the portrait *Mrs. Noah Smith and Her Children*, mentioned previously. The red of the boldly patterned floor covering is emphasized by the couch and chair upholstered in bright red. The Cheney family also chose a floor covering to match the furniture, according to their portrait which was painted about 1795. The dark green of the stripes enlivened with red flowers and red-orange leaves matches the upholstery of the couch which is dark green.

That George Washington used a definite plan in the selection of carpet colors and so stated it, and that other people, as revealed by portraits, also followed a set scheme in regard to the color of floor coverings, is of particular interest since it strongly suggests that the decor of rooms in the 18th century was not necessarily left to chance or an individual's whim but was more often based on formal concepts. Further evidence that there were established ideas in the 18th century about furnishing rooms, at least in reference to color, is the frequent use of the same color and often the same fabric for both furniture coverings and window hangings. Robert Carter, as previously mentioned, planned to have yellow damask at the windows and on the chairs in a room of his Williamsburg house. Perhaps the room was the third parlor, the one for which Carter had ordered from England a wallpaper having a blue ground with large yellow flowers.[133] Yellow also was the color of the damask window curtains and of most of the silk-covered chairs and the three sofas in the smaller drawing room of the President's house in Philadelphia.[134]

Such matching color schemes were applied in bedrooms or chambers, too, as the Cunningham inventory of 1748 indicates. Among the furnishings "in the Great Chamber first floor" of the Cunningham house in Boston were "6 Walnut Tree Chairs with Green China [silk] Bottoms . . . 1 Green Camblet Bed & Furniture Compleat & Lined with Strip'd Sattin . . . 1 Green Silk Quilt . . . 1 Sett Green Camblet Window Curts." Also listed among the furnishings of this room with its handsome-sounding green color scheme was "1 Canvas Floor Cloth." Perhaps the color of the floor covering matched or harmonized with the hangings and upholstery. This was the case in the larger dining room of President Washington's Philadelphia residence where, it is reported, "the window curtains were of crimson satin and the dominant color of the carpet was the same." [135]

Although a thorough study of the choice, use, placement, and relationship of colors as well as of furnishings is necessary to substantiate these projected suggestions concerning 18th-century taste, it seems more than likely that conventional opinions regarding the treatment of interiors existed and that more often than not they determined the appearance of rooms. In any case, the material presented here in regard to floor coverings does point to the presence in 18th-century America of established ideas concerning the selection of carpet colors. Presumably these concepts applied to most types of underfoot furnishings as well as to Wiltons, the kind Washington desired for the blue parlor at Mount Vernon, if obtainable with the "ground or principal flowers" to match the furniture.

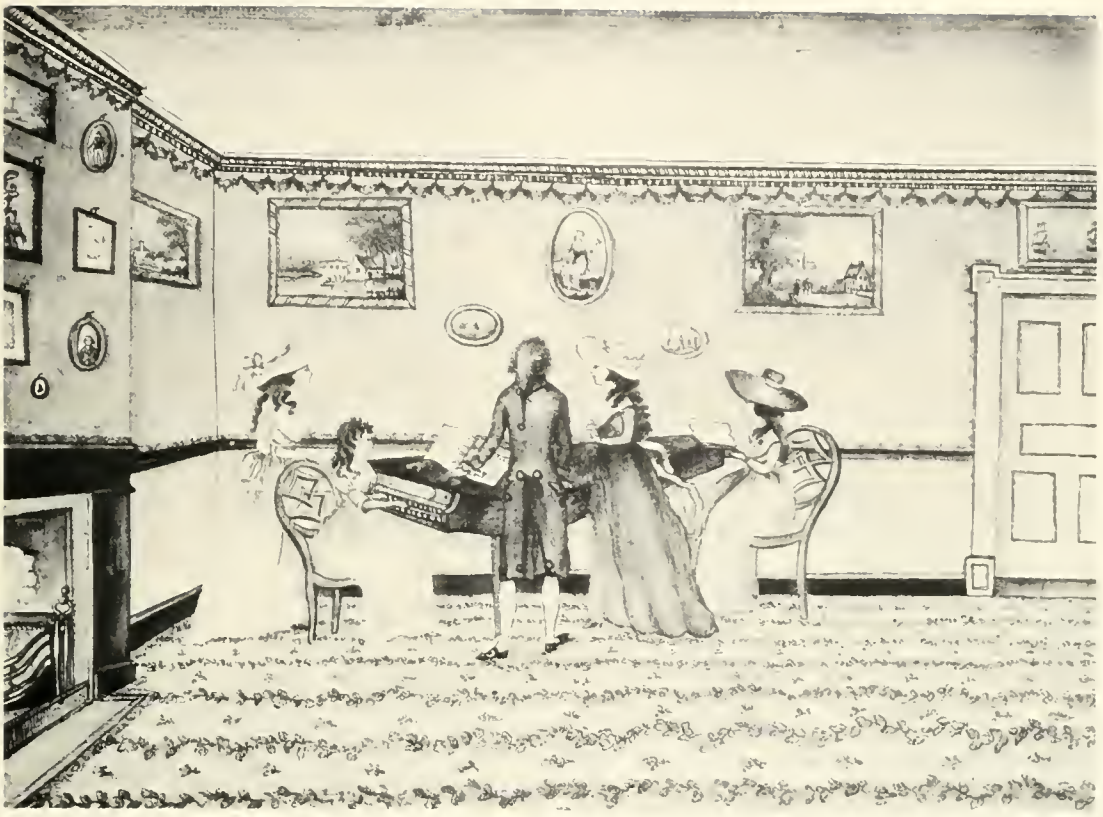
Conclusion

In conclusion, it is well to remember that floor coverings were the exception rather than the rule in the 18th century. Decorative for table coverings as well as decorative coverings for floors, carpets and carpeting were rare and valuable items of household furnishings even among the wealthy. In fact, their

[133] Rowland, loc. cit. (footnote 88).

[134] Stephen Decatur, "George Washington and His Presidential Furniture," *American Collector* (February 1941), vol. 10, p. 15.

[135] Ibid.



Piano Recital
(?) English, about 1800
(Courtesy of Colonel and Mrs. Edgar W. Garbisch.)

Figure 28.—The floor covering seen in this informal study of a musical recital—the instrument is believed to be a spinet or possibly a harpsichord—has a floral pattern of red roses with dark-green leaves arranged in rows on a light-green background. Numerous pictures in a variety of sizes are hung quite high, according to the fashion of the day, on the green walls that are edged with floral designs around the chair rail, door, and cornice.

value was sufficient for them, on occasion, to be purloined and for their owners to advertise for their recovery. For instance, a Boston businessman in 1752 advertised that he had had "taken off a Shop Window, 2 small English Carpets for Bed sides." A reward of three dollars was offered for "a Turkey carpet," stolen out of a house in 1755. In the South as in the North appeared similar advertisements such as this one in the *Virginia Gazette* of May 9, 1771. "SOME Time last Fall a CARPET was left at my House . . . the Size of it about eleven Feet by ten, which the Owner may have by proving his Property and paying for this Advertisement."

Such evidence, as well as letters, inventories, and diaries, suggests that carpets were scarce. This condition continued well through the 18th century, even after their established use as floor coverings rather than as ornamental pieces for tables and cupboards.

Of course most carpets were obtained by more orthodox means than theft. Their purchase by Americans with means is a reflection of the value placed on floor coverings in the 18th century. This is further reflected in the attention given to the selection and placement of carpets by notable Americans such as Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, and Abigail Adams. The inclusion of floor coverings in portraits implying pride of ownership as well as status also has been pointed out. Perhaps the best indication that carpets were highly prized is that a young and newly

wedded Baltimore couple seem to have considered a good floor covering as valuable as a silver teapot with stand, certainly one of the items of prestige in the 18th century when tea drinking was the social activity.[136] In a letter of 1799 to his father in England, Joseph Brevitt wrote suggesting that "If Mrs. Stracy should be induced to make me any present & request of you 'what may be best?' I would wish a silver Teapot & stand for my wife or a good carpet." [137]

[136] Rodris Roth, *Tea Drinking in 18th-Century America: Its Etiquette and Equipage* (Paper 14 in "Contributions from the Museum of History and Technology," *U.S. National Museum Bulletin 225*), Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961.

[137] Letter from Joseph Brevitt, Baltimore, to his father in England, 1799. (MS, Maryland Historical Society.) Brevitt Letter Book.

Chronological List of Pictures Consulted

1710 *Screening the South Sea Directors.* English. Reproduced in *Social England*, edited by Henry Duff Traill and J. S. Mann (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1902–04), vol. 5, p. 171.

1720 ca. *The Brothers Clarke of Swakeleys.* By Gawen Hamilton, English. Reproduced in *Connoisseur* (June 1939), vol. 103, p. xi (advertisement).

1729 *George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, and his Wife and Family* (fig. 10). By John Smibert, American. Reproduced in *American Processional* (Washington, D.C.: The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1950), p. 46, no. 18.

1730 ca. *Family Group.* By Gawen Hamilton, English. Reproduced in *Antiques* (March 1953), vol. 63, p. 270.

Assembly at Wanstead House (fig. 24). By William Hogarth, English. Reproduced in Ralph Edwards, *Early Conversation Pictures from the Middle Ages to about 1730* (London: Country Life, Ltd., 1954), p. 125, no. 87.

1730 *The Wollaston Family.* By William Hogarth, English. Reproduced in Edwards, *Early Conversation Pictures*, p. 126, no. 88.

1731 *The Wesley Family.* By William Hogarth, English. Reproduced in Ronald Brymer Beckett, *Hogarth* (London: Theodore Brun, Ltd., 1949), no. 42.

1732 *Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, with his Family.* By Gawen Hamilton, English. Reproduced in Edwards, *Early Conversation Pictures*, p. 130, no. 92.

The Cholmondeley Family. By William Hogarth, English. Reproduced in Beckett, *Hogarth*, no. 55.

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1739 *Various Kinds of Floor Decorations* (fig. 8). By John Carwitham, English. Reproduced in *Antiques* (January 1955), vol. 67, pp. 48–49.

1740 ca. *A Family Group.* By Joseph Highmore, English. Reproduced in *English Conversation Pictures of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, edited by George Charles Williamson (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1931), pl. 7.

The Lady's Last Stake. By William Hogarth, English. Reproduced in Tancred Borenius, *English Painting in the XVIIIth Century* (London: John Gifford, Ltd., 1938), pl. 11.

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1741 *Portrait of Isaac Royall and Family* (fig. 2). By Robert Feke, American. Reproduced in *Life in America* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1939), no. 10, p. 7.

1742 *Mr. and Mrs.* [*?Bennet or*] *Richard Bull of Northcourt*. By Arthur Devis, English. Reproduced in *Antiques* (January 1955), vol. 67, p. 44.

1744 *Shortly After Marriage* from "Marriage a la Mode" series. By William Hogarth, English. Reproduced in *Masterpieces of English Painting* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1946), pl. 3.

1745 ca. *Lady in a Blue Dress*. By Arthur Devis, English. Reproduced in *Antiques* (January 1955), vol. 67, p. 43.

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1747 ca. *Bull Family Group*. By Arthur Devis, English. Reproduced in Pavière, *The Devis Family of Painters*, pl. 22.

1750 ca. *The Rev. Streynsham Master and his Wife, of Croston Court, Lancashire*. By Arthur Devis, English. Reproduced in Oliver Brackett, *English Furniture Illustrated*, revised and edited by H. Clifford Smith (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 164, pl. 136.

[*A Gentleman and his Wife with their two Children.*] English. Reproduced in *Antiques* (February 1935), vol. 27, p. 73.

1760 ca. *The Honeymoon*. By John Collett, English. Photograph in collection of Frick Art Reference Library, New York.

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1766 *Queen Charlotte and The Two Elder Princes*. By John Zoffany, English. Reproduced in Ellis Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain, 1530 to 1790* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1953), pl. 191–B.

1767 *Portrait of Mary Warner* (fig. 17). By John Singleton Copley, American. Reproduced in *The Toledo Museum of Art Museum News* (Autumn 1959), new ser., vol. 2, p. 4.

1769 *Mr. Jeremiah Lee* (fig. 3). By John Singleton Copley, American. Reproduced in *The Wadsworth Atheneum Bulletin* (October 1945).

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1770 *Mrs. Congrieve and Children*. By Philip Reinagle, English. Reproduced in *18th Century English Homes* (London: The Geffrye Museum, 1959), pl. 5.

1771 *The Female Pyramid*. English. Reproduced in *Social England*, vol. 5, p. 483.

The Morning Toilet. Engraving by J. Goldar from a painting by H. Pugh, English. Reproduced in Brackett, *English Furniture Illustrated*, p. 194, pl. 166.

1772 *Nicholas Boylston* (fig. 18). By John Singleton Copley, American. Reproduced in *Art in America* (October 1949), vol. 37, p. 192.

1774 *Elie Valette Family.* By Charles Wilson Peale, American. Reproduced in Charles Coleman Sellers, *Portraits and Miniatures by Charles Wilson Peale*, "Transactions of the American Philosophical Society" (1952), new ser., vol. 42, part I, fig. 67.

1779 *Conrad Alexandre Gérard.* By Charles Wilson Peale, American. Reproduced in Sellers, *Portraits and Miniatures by Charles Wilson Peale*, fig. 101.

1780 ca. *The Copley Family.* By John Singleton Copley, English. Reproduced in John Walker, *Paintings from America* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1951), pl. 5.

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1781 Illustration for *The Sisters.* Engraved by Angus after Stothard, English. Reproduced in *Antiques* (April 1923), vol. 3, p. 160.

Illustration (Plate VIII) for *Betsy Thoughtless.* Engraved by Angus after Stothard, English. In collection of Prints from English Novels, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum.

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1790 ca. *Sir John and Lady Hopkins, with Doctor Boutflower and their children.* By John Zoffany, English. Reproduced in *Connoisseur* (February 1937), vol. 99, p. xxix (advertisement).

1790 *Colonel Benjamin Tallmadge and his son, William* (fig. 16). By Ralph Earl, American. Reproduced in *Connecticut Portraits by Ralph Earl, 1751–1801* (New Haven: Yale University, 1935), p. 21, no. 23.

Mrs. Benjamin Tallmadge with her son, Henry, and daughter, Maria. By Ralph Earl, American. Reproduced in *Connecticut Portraits by Ralph Earl, 1751–1801*, p. 20, no. 22.

1791 *Mrs. Mable Wyllys Wainwright.* By Ralph Earl, American. Reproduced in *Worcester Art Museum News Bulletin and Calender* (January 1946), vol. 11, p. 2.

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1792 *Chief Justice and Mrs. Oliver Ellsworth* (fig. 1). By Ralph Earl, American. Reproduced in *Connecticut Portraits by Ralph Earl, 1751–1801*, p. 14, no. 14.

1793 *John Phillips* (fig. 11). By Joseph Steward, American. Reproduced in Nina Fletcher Little, *American Decorative Wall Painting, 1700–1850* (Sturbridge, Mass.: Old Sturbridge Village, 1952), p. 100, fig. 115.

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The Cheney Family. ?American. Reproduced in *American Primitive Paintings from the Collection of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1957), Part II, pl. 31.

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Mrs. James Eldredge. Attributed to John Brewster, Jr., American. Reproduced in Little, "John Brewster, Jr.," p. 114, fig. 2.

1796 ca. *The Angus Nickelson Family.* Attributed to Ralph Earl, American. Reproduced in *Art in America* (October 1935), vol. 23, p. 155.

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1800 ca. *Child with Dog* (fig. 9). ?American. Reproduced in Nina Fletcher Little, *The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Collection* [at Colonial Williamsburg] (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957), no. 26.

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Boy with Finch (fig. 12). Attributed to John Brewster, Jr., American. Reproduced in Little, "John Brewster, Jr.," p. 122, fig. 19.

Colonel Thomas Cutts. Attributed to John Brewster, Jr., American. Reproduced in Little, "John Brewster, Jr.," p. 119, fig. 12.

Mrs. Thomas Cutts. Attributed to John Brewster, Jr., American. Reproduced in Little, "John Brewster, Jr.," p. 118, fig. 11.

Richard W. Bridgman and his brother. By Henry Singleton, English. In collection of The Baltimore Museum of Art.

1801 *James Prince and son, William* (fig. 19). By John Brewster, Jr., American. Reproduced in Little, "John Brewster, Jr.," Cover.

James Prince, Jr. By John Brewster, Jr., American. Reproduced in Little, "John Brewster, Jr.," p. 121, fig. 16.

Nathan Hawley, and Family (fig. 13). By William Wilkie, American. Reproduced in *The Concise Encyclopedia of American Antiques*, edited by Helen Comstock (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., [1958]), vol. 2, pl. 211–A.

1802 *Portrait of Ephraim Starr.* By Captain Simon Fitch, American. Reproduced in *Antiques* (December 1961), vol. 80, p. 582.

1809 *Samuel Griffin* (fig. 27). ?American. Reproduced in *American Primitive Paintings from the Collection of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1945), Part I, pl. 34.

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ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF THE FASHION PLATE

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Figure 1.—Dress of Sigmund von Herberstein for the Polish Embassy in 1517. Over his doublet and breeches he wears a brocade gown lined with silk. From *Gratae Posteritati*, 1560. (*Courtesy of British Museum, London.*)

John L. Nevinson

Origin and Early History Of the Fashion Plate

A fashion plate is a costume portrait indicating a suitable style of clothing that can be made or secured. Fashion illustration began in the late 15th and early 16th centuries with portrait pictures that made a person's identity known not by his individual features but rather by his dress.

This paper, based on a lecture given in the fall of 1963 at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, traces the history of the fashion plate from its origins to its full development in the 19th century. With the improvements in transportation and communication, increased attention came to be paid to foreign fashions, accessories, and even to hairstyles. As the reading public grew, so fashion consciousness increased, and magazines, wholly or partly devoted to fashions, flourished and were widely read in the middle social classes: this growth of fashion periodicals also is briefly described here.

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FASHION MAY BE DEFINED as a general style of dress appropriate for a particular person to wear at a certain time of day, on a special occasion, or for a specific purpose.

A fashion plate is a costume portrait, that is to say, a portrait not of an individual but one which shows the sort of clothes that are being worn or that are likely to be worn. It is a generalized portrait, indicating the style of clothes that a tailor, dressmaker, or store can make or supply, or showing how different materials can be made up into clothes. A fashion plate is related to the wear of its epoch and not to the history of dress, except insofar as the dress of a historical personage may be imitated at a later date. A fashion plate is reproduced mechanically, the woodcuts and engravings of earlier dates being succeeded by lithographs and finally by the various photographic processes of our time.

This definition of a fashion plate is broader than the one adopted by Mr. Vyvyan Holland, who has

written the only substantial book on the subject.[1] Mr. Holland limited his study to hand-colored fashion plates of the period from 1770 to 1899, possibly because these are most in favor with collectors. He omitted trade and advertisement plates, believing them to be primarily concerned with the history of dress.

The main functions of fashionable dress are to draw attention to the wearer, to define his social position, and to show who he is and what he is doing. Modesty, protection against the weather, and appeal to the opposite sex, are, so far as fashion is concerned, subsidiary functions. Interest in fashionable dress goes back at least to the 16th century, as is evidenced by a popular dialogue written by Alessandro Piccolomini, a relative of Pope Pius II, who subsequently became coadjutor Archbishop of Siena.[2] Piccolomini wrote under the pseudonym "Lo Stordito," and it is not clear to what extent the dialogue was sponsored by the Academy of the *Intronati*, an aristocratic, literary, and social society of which he was a member. He stated that the requirements of fashionable dress were that it be sumptuous in material, tasteful in style, and borne gracefully by the wearer. Unfortunately for the costume historian, the dialogue is not illustrated.

It has been assumed too readily perhaps that the fashion plate dates from the late 18th century, but it is not difficult to demonstrate that it existed in all its essentials at earlier periods, even though its history may not be continuous. The beginning of the illustration of fashions is found in portraits, the earliest of which, either sculptured or painted, developed from images of kings and important personages.[3] These images, unlike the *imagines* of the Romans, made no attempt to portray the features of an individual, but made his identity known rather by his clothes, his arms, and other indications of rank or position. The development of the stylized image into the personal portrait is well illustrated in the diary of Jörg von Ehingen.[4] Von Ehingen, who traveled widely in Europe during the years preceding 1460, might be described as a professional jouster, who took part, usually with great success, in tournaments at the various courts. To illustrate the account of his exploits, he had portraits drawn and painted of the different princes and kings, portraying each not with his crown and scepter but with the distinctive fashion of his court. This diary—not printed until the 19th century—was circulated in manuscript and shows, in addition to the interest in personal portraits, the growing interest in the dress of individuals.

Figure 2.—Dress of Sigmund von Herberstein for the second embassy to Moscow, 1526. He wears a wide-sleeved gown with the collar and lining made of fine sables. His fur-lined high cap is of white felt, its brim distinguished by a band of red cloth, a mark of nobility. From *Gratae Posteritati*, 1560. (*Courtesy of British Museum, London.*)

Although the earlier painters of the Italian Renaissance recorded the decorative and often exotic dress

[1] Vyvyan Holland, *Hand Coloured Fashion Plates*, 1770–1899 (Boston: Boston Book and Art Shop, Inc., 1955).

[2] Alessandro Piccolomini, *Dialogo de la bella creanza de le donne* (Venice, 1540). The dialogue is reprinted in G. Zonta, *Trattati del Cinquecento sulla donna* (1913), but it deserves a modern translation and editing.

[3] Sir Henry Hake, "The English Historic Portrait." Lecture for the British Academy, 1943.

[4] Malcolm Letts, *The Diary of Jörg von Ehingen* (1929).

Figure 3.—Dress of Sigmund von Herberstein for an embassy to the Sultan, 1541. The short gown (*Schaube*) of Italian brocade figured with black and gold has wide shoulders and padded upper sleeves. The collar, lining, and foresleeves are of similar fabric but with a dark violet ground for contrast. From *Gratae Posteritati*, 1560. (*Courtesy of British Museum, London.*)

of their times, their portraits of individuals consisted in the main of medallic heads and busts. It was the German portrait painters who, to a greater extent, recorded and disseminated the knowledge of fashions. Hans Burgkmair painted himself on the occasions of his betrothal in 1497 and his marriage in 1498,[5] and in the 16th century Hans Holbein the younger noted on his drawings the dress material and colors of the clothes worn by his sitters.[6] Even a much less distinguished person, Matthäus Schwartz, a clerk employed by the banking firm of the Fuggers at Augsburg, had a book prepared showing the clothes he wore at what he considered to be the most important stages of his career.[7]

The first person to have such pictures printed was Sigmund von Herberstein, who deserves detailed consideration.[8] In his diplomatic career, which extended over 30 years, Sigmund von Herberstein served three Emperors—Maximilian I, Charles V, and Ferdinand I. He was a student of Russian history and an outstanding linguist, who, having learned Wendish as a boy, found no difficulty with the Polish and Russian languages. When, in his old age, he printed his memoirs, he doubtlessly aimed at giving information on how an ambassador should conduct himself and to this end included illustrations of what he actually had worn, which in many copies of the memoirs are carefully colored by hand.[9] Concerning his journey in 1517 (fig. 1), he states that "In these robes I was sent on the embassy to Sigismund King of Poland," no doubt the fashion for the formal dress of an envoy. On his first embassy to the Grand Duke of Moscow in 1517 he was presented with a Russian fur-lined robe, but on his second embassy in 1526, he received a greater distinction (fig. 2): "Having been sent a second time by the Emperor Ferdinand then Archduke to Moscow, the Grand Duke bestowed upon me these robes." This dress was far more sumptuous than the formal black velvet gown which he normally wore for embassies to the Spanish and other courts.

By 1541 there was a change in fashion (fig. 3). Von Herberstein wrote: "We two orators were sent in this dress to the Turkish Emperor," and it was in this dress that von Herberstein, suffering perhaps from arthritis, complained of having great difficulty

[5] Sigrid F. Christensen, *Die männliche Kleidung in der süddeutschen Renaissance* (1934), pl. 21.

[6] Sir Karl T. Parker, *The drawings of H. Holbein at Windsor Castle* (1945), pls. 16, 19, 24.

[7] This book, *Klaidungsbüchlein*, in the Herzog Anton-Ulrich Museum, Brunswick, Germany, was edited by August Fink and published in full in 1963 by the Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, Berlin.

[8] For a general account, see J. L. Nevinson, "Sigmund von Herberstein: Notes on 16th century dress," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für historische Waffen- und Kostum-Kunde* (1959), new ser. 1, p. 86.

[9] Sigmund von Herberstein, *Gratae Posteritati* . . . (Vienna, 1560).

Figure 4.—Sigmund von Herberstein in robes presented to ambassadors by the Sultan, 1541. The Turkish gown of yellow silk figured with black, with some of the medallions outlined in blue, has long sleeves that hide the hands. The inner robe is of red silk figured with yellow and gathered with a blue sash. From *Gratae Posteritati*, 1560. (*Courtesy of British Museum, London.*)

in bowing low enough to kiss the hand of the seated Sultan. The imperial fashion of breeches and hose might have seemed indelicate to Suleiman "the Magnificant," who gave the ambassadors other robes (fig. 4): "The Emperor of the Turks presented us also with these robes." The long-gowned costume shown here should have been completed by a turban, but von Herberstein evidently would not allow himself to be depicted in this.

Von Herberstein seems to have kept his robes in his palace in Vienna, along with his collection of Russian and oriental weapons, illustrated in his history of Russia:[10] these, and stuffed specimens of Aurochs, then almost extinct, and European bison, formed the first museum of costume and natural history on record.

With the development of ceremonial, some of the princely courts of Germany had illustrations prepared of what should be worn by the officials of different grades (fig. 5). Several copies of each of these *Hofkleiderbücher*—books giving rules or standards for correct court dress—were no doubt issued, but none seems to have been printed for the general information of the public. The first printed book on tailoring, by Juan de Alcega, was published in 1588 and includes diagrams showing how to cut ceremonial robes from the roll of cloth,[11] but there are no illustrations of what the completed garments should look like.

The history of fashion plates, therefore, is to be followed in less specialized works. In the 16th century, with the improvement of communications and the continuation of voyages of discovery, great interest developed in the costume and way of life of other nations. It is in this connection that the word "fashion" was first used in its modern sense. In an address to King Henry VIII, a petitioner in 1529, deploring the sinfulness of the people of England, wrote:[12]

> The pryncypall cause [of sin] is their costly apparell and specially their manyfolde and divers changes of fasshyons which the men and specially the women must weare uppon both hedde and bodye: sometyme cappe, sometyme hoode, now the French fasshyon now the Spanyshe fasshyon and then the Italyan fasshyon and the Myllen [Milan] fasshyon, so that there is noo ende of consuminge of substance . . . .

Foreign fashions were being imitated by English ladies. Inventories[13] in the Public Record Office in London show that the English queens had robes cut in

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[10] Sigmund von Herberstein, *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*, expanded ed. (Basel: Oporinus, 1556).

[11] Juan de Alcega, *Libro di geometria y traca* (1589). See also, *Tailor and cutter* (London, 1933), no. 68. A copy of the 1588 edition was acquired by the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C., in 1964.

[12] "Supplication to the King." Printed by the Early English Text Society, extra ser. (1871), p. 52.

[13] *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, vol. 1 (2), no. 3326.

Figure 5.—Leaf from a book of court costumes showing back and front view of a gentleman's dress. German, second half of the 16th century. (*Courtesy of Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.*)

Spanish, Milanese, or French styles. As for men, it was said that they could not make up their minds what to wear, and a popular caricature shows an Englishman standing naked with a roll of cloth under his arm and a pair of tailor's shears in his hand, saying: [14]

> I am an English man, and naked I stand here,
> Musyng in my mynde what raiment I shal were,
> For now I wyll were thys, and now I wyll were that:
> Now I wyll were I cannot tel what.

London, however, was not a fashion center, and the first book on the fashions of nations was printed in Paris in 1562.[15] In his introduction to the book François Deserpz moralized: [16]

> . . . noz vieux predecesseurs . . . ont esté plus curieux de sumptueuse vesture que de rare vertu . . . car tout ainsi qu'on cognoist le Moyne au froc, le Fol au chaperon, & le Soldat aux armes, ainsi se cognoist l'homme sage à l'habit non excessif.

Acknowledgments were made to the late Captain Roberval and to an unnamed Portuguese, but it is not known which of them contributed the portrait of the

[14] Andrew Boorde, *Fyrst Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge* (1542). Reprinted by the Early English Text Society, extra ser., vol. 10 (1870), p. 116.

[15] *Recueil de la diversité des habits* . . . (1562). The book was reissued in 1564 and 1567.

[16] Translated, this reads: " . . . our predecessors of old . . . were more careful about sumptuous dress than rare virtue . . . for as the monk was recognized by his frock, the jester by his cap, and the soldier by his arms, so the wise man was known by his moderate habit."

L'angloyſe.
Ainſi veſtue eſt vne femme Angloiſe
Par le deſſus ſon bonnet eſt fourré,
On la cognoiſt (bié qu'aux lieux on ne voi
Facilement à ſon bonnet carré. ſe)

Figure 6.—Portrait of an English lady. From *Recueil de la diversité des habits*, 1567 ed. (*Courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum, London.*)

Figure 7.—Dress of a French woman (front view) with a tight-sleeved bodice through the cuts of which the lining is drawn out in puffs. From *Omnium gentium habitus . . .*, 1563 ed. (*Courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum, London.*)

English lady (fig. 6). Although she is said to be distinguishable by her square bonnet, it is hard to find the style paralleled in any other picture. The huge slashes on the bodice of her gown surely are exaggerated, as is the smallness of the muff which hangs by a cord from her waist. On the other hand, Joris Hoefnagel copied and used the portrait as one of a group of citizens standing in the foreground of Hogenberg's 1574 plan of London,[17] so the figure must have been regarded as approximately accurate.

Much more convincing as evidence of fashions are the etchings by Aeneas Vico that appear in Bertelli's book on the costumes of the peoples, published in Venice in 1563.[18] The French woman shown in figure 7 clearly illustrates a fashion which is familiar enough in portraits. Of particular interest is the back view (fig. 8) showing her petticoat. This type of petticoat was popular in Spain in the late 15th

[17] A. M. Hind, *Engraving in England in the 16th and 17th centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), vol. 1, pl. 34.

[18] F. Bertelli, *Omnium fere gentium nostrae aetatis habitus . . .* (Venice, 1563).

Figure 8.—Dress of a French woman (back view) showing the manner in which the bodice was laced and the hood fell at the back. The skirt is raised, revealing the farthingale petticoat with the roll at its hem which contained cane stiffening (*verdugo*). From *Omnium gentium habitus . . .* , 1563 ed. (*Courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum, London.*)

Figure 9.—Dress of a noblewoman of Mantua. From Vecellio, *De gli habiti antichi e moderni*, 1590. (*Courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum, London.*)

century,[19] but was not adopted in France, Italy, and England until the second half of the 16th century.

The next development in the history of the fashion plate is found in the costume books by Cesare Vecellio, published in Venice in 1590 and 1598.[20] Vecellio, a member of the same family as Titian, showed the costume of the different ranks of society in the various Italian cities and states, in the other countries of Europe, and indeed in the known world; he also depicted a number of antique and old-fashioned dresses. Unfortunately, the illustrations (fig. 9) by Christoph Krieger, whose name was Italianized as Guerra, are not as good as Vico's, and Krieger died before the series was complete. But Vecellio took great pains to secure accurate and up-to-date information about fashions, and he received letters and drawings from his friends in various cities of Italy. Master Erasmo Falte of Parma sent him particulars of the

[19] For the origin of this Spanish fashion, n 1470, see Carmen Bernis Madrazo, *Indumentaria medieval espanola* (1956), p. 50, pl. 158.

[20] There are two editions of the book by Cesare Vecellio: *De gli habiti antichi e moderni . . .* (Venice: Zenaro, 1590 [Italian text]); *Habiti Antichi e Moderni* (Venice: Sessa, 1598 [Italian and Latin text]). The quality of the woodblocks and impressions varies considerably.

dress of the Duchess of Parma, together with a sketch by a good local painter, which Vecellio describes and adds:[21]

> Sotto costumano il verducato, overo faldiglia, qual tien con arte la sottana larga à modo di campana, che torna molto commodo al caminare, ò danzare: & hora si costumano per tutta l'Italia questa sopra detta faldiglia.

Thus, the bell-shaped farthingale (fig. 8) had by 1590 become the general wear of the upper classes in Italy, as it was already in Spain, France, and England.

Of even greater interest is the evidence of Vecellio's relations with a fashion house in Venice. In his general account of the housedresses of the noble ladies of his time, he mentions the rich modern materials and especially silk brocades of four and even of six colors, admirably woven:[22]

> Di queste opere si belle è stato in Venetia auttore M. Bartholomeo Bontempele dal Calice, il quale alle volte con le mostre, ch' egli fa di questi drappi de' quali lui è stato inventore, mostra la grandezza dell'ingegno suo, la quale è accompagnata da una incomparabile liberalità, e bontà, per ilche è molto amato dalla nobiltà Venetiana, & da molti Principi d'Italia & in specie dal Serenissimo Duca di Mantova. Nella sua buttiga dove molti Signori e Principi mandano a fornirsi, & fino al serraglio del Gran Turco, si veggono broccati à opera di tutte le sorte d'oro e di argento.

It may seem strange that within 20 years of the Battle of Lepanto (1571) Venetian fabrics were exported from Bontempele's sign of "The Chalice" to Constantinople to compete with the noted velvets of Brusa. After describing the clothes of the best dressed merchants, Vecellio does not hesitate to mention his friends Master Paolo, spice merchant and vendor of the celebrated *Theriakon* (known in England as Venice treacle), of the sign of "The Ostrich," and Bernadino Pillotto, seller of pictures and other ornaments.

At this time there were also woodcuts illustrating hairstyles. The exact date of Christoph Krieger's *Varie Acconciature di Teste* (fig. 10) is not known. While Vecellio had remarked that the Venetian ladies were imitating the goddess Diana and surmounting their tresses with two little curls like horns, Krieger made illustrations that were even more fanciful. Each lady bears the name of a city and a distinguishing quality or temperament, but there is no more reason to connect the styles with local fashions than to believe

Figure 10.—Fashion plate depicting fanciful hair style of a lady from Ferrara, by Christoph Krieger. From *Varie acconciature di teste*, ca. 1590. (*Courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum, London.*)

[21] Translated, this reads: "Underneath, the habit of the ladies [who imitate the Duchess] is to wear the farthingale or pleated frock, which skillfully holds the petticoat out wide like a bell. This fashion is extremely convenient for walking or dancing, and nowadays, ladies throughout all Italy wear this pleated frock mentioned above." (1590 ed., folio 187.a.)

[22] Translated, this reads: "The originator of these beautiful fabrics in Venice is Master Bartholomew Bontempele at the sign of the 'Chalice.' From time to time at exhibitions he makes of these materials he has created, he shows the greatness of his intellect, which is accompanied by an incomparable generosity and kindness for which he is greatly loved by the Venetian nobility, by many princes of Italy, and in particular by his Serene Highness the Duke of Mantua. In his store, to which many gentlemen and princes send orders, even the Seraglio of the Grand Turk, are to be seen brocades worked in all manners of gold and silver." (1590 ed., folio 139.)

Figure 11.—Courtier following the edict of 1633. He has laid aside his lace collar and fine clothes. By Abraham Bosse, 1633. (*Courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*)

Figure 12.—La Galerie du Palais. The fashionable crowd throngs the milliners' counters in the Palais Royal. By Abraham Bosse, 1636. (*Courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*)

that the ladies of Ferrara were bold or those of Todi capricious

Indeed, this series would not be considered in connection with fashion plates were it not for a conversation in Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, first acted in 1600 by the Children of the Queen's Chapel. Philautia addresses her friend Phantaste (Act 2, scene 1):

> Philautia: . . . What, have you changed your headtire?
>
> Phantaste: Yes, faith, the other was near the common, it had no extraordinary grace; besides, I had worn it almost a day, in good troth.
>
> Philautia: I'll be sworn, this is most excellent for the device, and rare; 'tis after the Italian print we looked on t'other night.

This certainly suggests that one of the little eyases, perhaps even Nathaniel Field or Salathiel Pavy, was wearing a fantastic wig designed after one of the Krieger woodcuts.

In the early 17th century there was nothing published in northern Europe that was closely related to the fashion trade. There are engravings of costume figures such as the *Sieben Edelleute verschiedener Nation* by Willem Buytewech (Amsterdam, ca. 1614), which are charmingly drawn but, as to costume, idealized and exaggerated.[23] The same criticism applies to the

[23] There is an excellent reprint of Buytewech's book with an introduction by W. Bruhn (1926).

later series by J. de St. Igny, especially in *Le Jardin de la Noblesse*, and to Jacques Callot's *La Noblesse*,[24] which depict military and court dress with less caricature than most of this master's work. Among the engravings of Abraham Bosse, there is a series (fig. 11) relating to the sumptuary law of 1633 by which Louis XIII, at the instigation of Cardinal Richelieu, tried to curb the extravagance and simplify the dress of the ladies and gentlemen of his court. This series is worth mentioning as a record of the dress at this period, but neither these engravings nor the better known "Galerie du Palais" (fig. 12) are, strictly speaking, fashion plates which provide information for dressmakers or wearers of clothes.[25]

In England, the engravings were of a rather different style. Dutch prints of allegorical subjects were in vogue, and there are innumerable sets of prints of the seven Ages of mankind, the five senses, the four seasons, the continents, and the liberal arts, typified by real and imaginary figures in all styles of dress. Jean Barrà's figure "Seeing" (fig. 13), with her looking glass and perspective glass, accompanied by the farsighted eagle, is illustrated here mainly because of its explanatory quatrain mentioning fashions.[26]

Not until the early 1640s can reliable engravings of English fashions be found. Most of Wenceslas Hollar's 1639 series, "Ornatus Muliebris Anglicanus, or, the severall habits of English women from the Nobilitie to the Country woman, as they are in these times," is slightly suspect as being imaginary or at best idealized, though the lady in waiting (Hollar's no. 23) and the country woman (Hollar's no. 26) walking on her iron-ring pattens may be portraits. Hollar's "Theatrum Mulierum or Aula Veneris" of 1644 has a much stronger claim to represent the fashions of London, although some of the European women may be in the traditional clothes of their cities and states. The full-length female figures of the seasons are really costume portraits set against London backgrounds[27] (fig. 14), and, although charming in themselves, they are not true fashion plates, while those of the series of women's heads in circles, which are not copied from other work, are simply portraits[28] of ladies whom Hollar actually knew in London. Notwithstanding his engravings of muffs,[29] it is most unlikely that Hollar had any connection with either a fashion house or a milliner's shop in London.

Figure 13.—SEEING, from a set of the *Five Senses*. Engraving by Jean Barrà, ca. 1625. (*Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London.*)

During the Commonwealth period (1648–60) Hollar's work depicting costumes faded out, but the diarist John Evelyn was writing a little book, *Tyrannus, or the Mode*, which was published in 1661.[30] In it he

[24] C. LE BLANC, *Manuel de l'amateur des estampes* (1854) nos 549–560.

[25] For examples, see A. BLUM, *L'oeuvre gravé de Abraham Bosse* (1924), nos. 957–961; the plate "Pompe funèbre de la Mode," by A. BLUM (in *Les Modes au XVII^me siècle*, 1927), p. 21; and F. P. WILSON, "Funeral obsequies of Sir All-in-new-fashions" (in *Shakespeare Survey*, 1958), p. 98.

[26] J. L. NEVINSON, "Fashion Plates and Fashion, 1625–35," *Apollo* (1950) vol. 51, pp. 138–140.

[27] GUSTAVE PARTHEY, *Kurzes Verzeichniss der Hollarschen Kupferstichen* (1853), nos. 606–609.

[28] GUSTAVE PARTHEY, *Kurzes Verzeichniss der Hollarschen Kupferstichen* (1853), nos. 1908–12, 1930–33.

[29] PARTHEY, ibid., nos. 1946–51.

[30] JOHN EVELYN, *Tyrannus or the Mode* (1661). Facsimile reprint with introduction by J. L. NEVINSON (Oxford: Luttrell Society, 1951), no. 11.

Figure 14.—Winter. The lady wears a hood and mask, together with furs. She is walking in Cornhill, London. Engraving by Wenceslas Hollar, 1643 (Parthey no. 609). (*Courtesy of British Museum, London.*)

mentions a French woman in London during the troubles, whose customers tormented her with inquiries about French fashions to such an extent that she used to devise "new Fancies out of her own Head, which were never worn in France." Most likely she did not distribute fashion plates but displayed actual garments or miniature models, perhaps mounted as dolls ("babies"), as examples of new fashions.

In the *Tyrannus*, Evelyn not only touched on the history and psychology of fashion but also went as far as to recommend a reformed dress for men, including the Persian vest and sash which was to be reflected to a certain extent in the fashions of the mid-1660s. Since he did not illustrate his theory, there has always been some dispute as to what the Persian dress actually was,[31] but in any case the fashion did not last. On the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Charles II, returning to England from Holland, retained Dutch fashions for a while (fig. 15). But, by 1670, English men's dress approximated the French in style, although not in sumptuosity.

In the second half of the 17th century the attention of Europe was focused on the court of Louis XIV and the French style of dress, especially for men, predominated. In particular, the coat (*justaucorps*), which evolved from the cassock, an outer garment, began to be worn regularly over the doublet, which by this time was already much reduced in size yet destined to survive as the waistcoat (*veste*). This fashion spread fairly rapidly through Europe—in England, as has been mentioned, it was dominant by 1670—but it is not clear how. The position of France, however, was stated in a fashion article in the *Mercure Galant* in 1673 (vol. 3):[32]

> . . . rien ne plait davantage que les Modes nées en France . . . . C'est pourquoi dans toutes les Provinces du Monde on fait venir de France quantité de choses qui regardent l'habillement encor qu'on ne s'habille pas tout-a-fait à la Françoise . . . .

The *Mercure Galant*, strangely neglected by costume historians, occupies a most important place in the history of fashion literature, since it is the first and for almost a century the only periodical to contain regular articles on contemporary fashion. The person responsible for editing and indeed for writing these articles was Jean Donneau de Visé (1640–1710), an unsuccessful dramatist, rival of Molière, whom he sarcastically attacked several times in print. The story of his journalistic venture is not at all easy to unravel,[33]

[31] E. S. de Beer, King Charles II's own fashion," *Warburg Institute Journal* (1935), vol. 2, no. 2, p. 105.

[32] Translated, this reads: ". . . nothing is more pleasing than the styles born in France . . . . This is why much relating to dress is imported from France into all the provinces of the world, though the final dress is not exactly French."

[33] Emile Magne, *Images de Paris sous Louis XIV* (1939). In this book, the social historian Dr. Magne devotes the best part of a chapter to the *Mercure Galant* and gives a listing of all fashion articles up to 1700.

FIGURE 15

FIGURE 16

Figure 15.—Man in petticoat breeches (Rhinegraves). This illustration is not a fashion plate but an engraving that was often reprinted in pattern books used by teachers and students of figure drawing. From a drawing book by S. le Clerc, ca. 1665. (Author's collection.)

Figure 16.—Courtier in full dress for the winter 1677–78 wearing a flame-colored embroidered cloth cloak over a gray silk coat and matching waistcoat. This costume is almost as grand as the blue privilege "*justaucorps à brevet*" which, after 1665, was occasionally granted to others than princes of royal blood. Issued with the *Mercure Galant*, 1678. (Author's collection.)

Figure 17.—Lady fitted out for the winter of 1677–78 wears a dress of black velvet with diamond knots and an ermine-bordered skirt. She carries a colored muff. Issued with the *Mercure Galant*, 1678. (Author's collection.)

FIGURE 17

Figure 18.—Outdoor winter dress for men is strongly influenced by military fashions. An enormous fringed baldrick, tied by a military scarf, supports the diminutive dress sword. Wigs and hats were comparatively small for the winter 1677–78. Issued with the *Mercure Galant*, 1678. (Author's collection.)

Figure 19.—Lady in informal winter attire walks to her coach wearing a flowered gold-brocaded gown which has been caught back to show her embroidered petticoat bordered with ermine. She wears a black coif so that her hair will not be disarranged. Issued with the *Mercure Galant*, 1678. (Author's collection.)

since the octavo publications ("Chez Claude Barbin au Palais") were pirated almost immediately, and impressions—all that I have seen are duodecimos—appeared in Paris and Amsterdam ("Suivant la Copie imprimée à Paris"). A single number of an English translation, the *Mercury Gallant*, is in the British Museum.

The *Mercure Galant* was published sporadically from 1672 through 1674, with six numbers in all. In 1677, it obtained a privilege and, with a dedication to the Dauphin, took a new lease on life under the title *Le nouveau Mercure Galant*. Thereafter, it flourished for some years; the January–March number for 1677 was followed by monthly parts, and on May 15, 1678, the first supplementary (*Extraordinaire*) number was published, containing an article on fashions illustrated with fashion plates.[34] The magazine was addressed to the ladies, and, in addition to a modicum of news and war reports, it contained gossip, poetry, riddles, songs with their music, and correspondence with readers, some no doubt fictitious. It deserves full credit for being the first modern-style magazine.

The fashions for the winter 1677–78 (figs. 16–19) may be followed in the pages of the *Mercure Galant*, but, since these four fashion plates were also distributed separately, their connection with it has often been overlooked. The same is true of the large engraving of the interior of a milliner's shop (fig. 20), the items in which were numbered and described in the text of

[34] See J. L. Nevinson, "The 'Mercury Gallant' or European Fashions in the 1670's," *Connoisseur* (1955) vol. 136, p. 87.

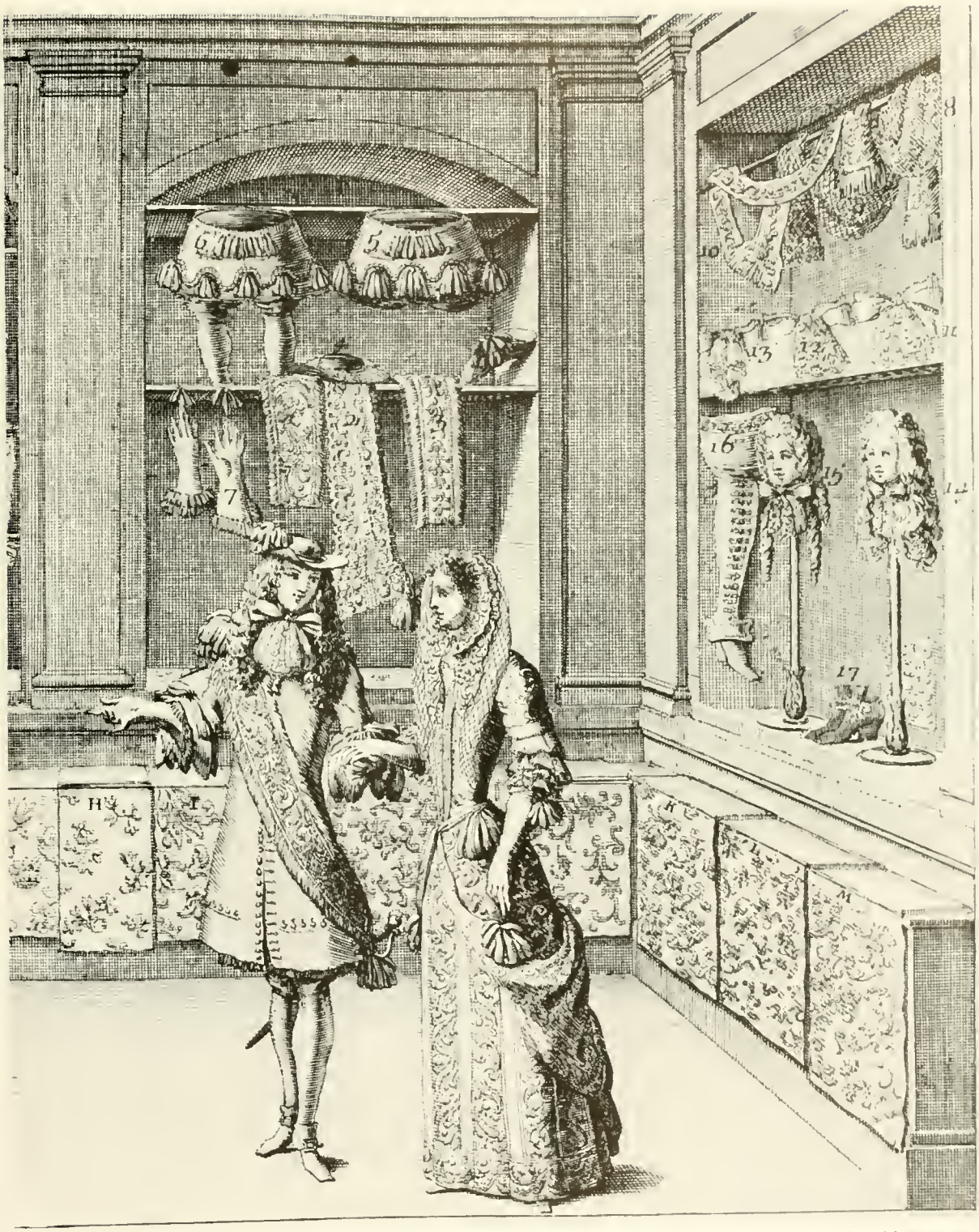

Figure 20.—Interior of a Parisian milliner's shop. On display are accessories to men's fashionable costume—breeches, scarves, gloves, and wigs. Detail from an engraving by J. Lepautre after J. Bérain. Reengraved from a small print in the *Extraordinaire* issue of the *Mercure Galant*, March 1678. (Author's collection.)

Habit d'Eſte
Ruban large tabizé ou brodé avec de la frange
Juſte au Corps deſtamine Couleur de Prince.
La Veſte auſſy longue que le Juſte au Corps de toile blanche garnie de dentelle ou point.
Tour de manche double
Les Gans garnis de dentelle
Le Baudrier à fons blanc et des grands fleurons brodés de la Couleur de l'habit.

Figure 21.—Summer dress of a gentleman. He wears a linen waistcoat garnished with lace, and a long wig (cf. fig. 18). From the *Extraordinaire* of the *Mercure Galant*, June 1678. (Author's collection.)

Figure 22.—Summer dress of a lady with a pleated lace (*Point d'Angleterre*) petticoat. From the *Extraordinaire* of the *Mercure Galant*, June 1678. (Author's collection.)

the *Mercure Galant*. Donneau de Visé depended on trade support and took the opportunity to mention names wherever he could. The new fabrics displayed below the shelves are distinguished by letters; the one on the right (letter M), for example, is an Italian yellow satin brocaded with white and violet. Other small figured fabrics, he wrote, might be obtained away from the Palais "chez le Sieur Baroy, au Cloître Saint Opportune," and ribbons might be found from Sieur le Gras in the Palais itself. The editor de Visé gives thanks to M. Bérain (1637–1711), designateur ordinaire du Cabinet du Roy, and to M. Lepautre (1618–82) for engraving the plates.

The summer fashions for 1678 were illustrated in the next *Extraordinaire* number published on July 20 and represented by a gentleman (fig. 21) and his lady (fig. 22). Details of these plates are poor, and, although they are taken from the Dutch edition, the original designer and engraver must have been far less competent than either Bérain or Lepautre.

The winter fashions for 1678–79 were described in a long article in the ordinary October number of the *Mercure Galant*, which, for the costume historian, is of great importance, since it deals among other topics with the evasion of the sumptuary legislation by the fashionable world. The fashion plates are by a new artist and are reduced to two (figs. 23 and 24).

From this point the *Mercure Galant* ceased to publish a regular series of fashion plates. Occasional articles on fashion appeared through the rest of the 1680s and into the next decade, but they are shorter and less informative. Donneau de Vizé's adventure into fashion journalism evidently had failed, probably because of a lack of demand for it. Fashions both in clothes and in fabrics did not change very rapidly, and general fashion information was supplied by two

Figure 23.—Gentleman in winter attire supposedly just returned from the army. He ordered his gray cloth suit from Sieur Gaultier, whose shop, "A la Couronne," was located in the Rue des Bourdonnais. From the *Mercure Galant*, October 1678. (Author's collection.)

Figure 24.—Lady in winter dress of brown Florentine satin. Her petticoat is of off-white (*d'un blanc un peu sale*) satin brocaded with blue, violet, red, and brown designs. From the *Mercure Galant*, October 1678. (Author's collection.)

other sources: first, by the annual almanacs, which were often embellished by a large engraving of some important political event, and secondly, by the print shops in the Rue St. Jacques and elsewhere, which commissioned not only Lepautre, who had worked for the *Mercure Galant*, but the Bonnarts, Jean de St. Jean, Arnoult, and other competent artists to produce large engravings of contemporary personalities. These for the most part depicted members of the French royal family and court circle, actors and actresses, and other well-known characters, not always named on the print. A "Man of Quality" (fig. 25) is almost certainly a portrait, which, when suitably colored as many of the prints were, could be pinned up or framed for decorative effect. It is wrong to take such a print, as some writers on costume have done, for a fashion plate recording what was worn or likely to be worn in the year in which it was engraved.

The decorative character of these distinguished prints was often enhanced by "dressing" or overlaying them with small pieces of fabric, lace, or paper.[35] The finest series of such prints is that in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City. In figure 26, the outlines of the engraving were carefully cut with a

[35] See F. G. Roe, "Prints and Tinsel," *Connoisseur* (1932), vol. 89, p. 302.

Figure 25.—Man of quality at the court of Louis XIV. Engraving by Jean de St. Jean, 1693. (*Courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum, London.*)

knife, and selected pieces of small-pattern fabrics were mounted on stiff paper forming an underlay to the print.

In England, there was no fashion journalism or series of prints that can be regarded as illustrations of late 17th-century fashion. Some use can be made of the engravings after Marcellus Laroon, which were first sold separately and later published in 1711 as the *Cryes of London*,[36] to illustrate costume in England, but neither these nor the illustrations of English men and women which appear in general works on the costume of Europe can be accepted as fashion plates. Other series, such as the plates on the dress of Augsburg engraved by Jeremias Wolff, belong more to the history of costume than to the history of fashion.

In the early years of the 18th century, Bernard Picard, best known for his great illustrated work on the religions of the world, made a few small and very neat engravings of fashionable ladies, which were published in Amsterdam in the 1720s. These engravings, some dated 1703, should not be classed as fashion plates; like the Le Clerc engraving of the man in rhinegrave breeches (fig. 15), they are from drawing books. Some of them, part reengraved by G. Bickham, Jr., were reissued in London after 1732.[37]

In Paris there was a revival of the fashion plate in the late 1720s. The still-existing *Mercure de France*, direct successor of the *Mercure Galant*, carried an occasional fashion article with engravings of dress accessories. In March 1729 (fig. 27), there is a not-very-well-defined sketch of a lady with her page, meeting a gentleman. The accompanying paragraphs are not valuable but contain a recommendation for "garnitures" to be had from La Demoiselle Perronet, in the Cour Abbatial of St. Germain des Pres. As for "coeffures et têtes . . . on les coeffe sur une poupée."

In the same year, 1729, a set of eight fashion plates entitled *Recueil des Differentes Modes du Temps* was issued by Herisset apparently to advertise a modiste called Chéreau at the "Grand St. Remy" in the Rue St. Jacques. They are carefully drawn and show back and front views as well as indicating materials (fig. 28). No accompanying text has been found, but as they are known in two versions, one said to have been printed in Germany, it is likely that some descriptions were prepared for the export market.[38]

The French engravers working in England—Gravelot, Grignon, and Boitard—produced some dated portraits of English ladies which can be used as fashion illustrations. The caricature scenes, "Taste à la Mode, 1735" and "Taste à la Mode, 1745," published by Robert Sayer in 1749,[39] also may serve as records of fashion. There was, however, no journal of fashion in England before the reign of George III. Indeed, there seems to have been no publication or series of prints to give guidance to the fashion trade in Europe in the mid-18th century.

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[36] *The Cryes of the City of London, Drawne after the Life*, delineated by M. Lauron, engraved by P. Tempest (London: H. Overton, 1711).

[37] *A new Drawing book of Modes*, by Mons B. Picart (printed for Richard Ware at the Bible & Sun in Amen Corner, Warwick Lane, London; no date).

[38] R. Colas, *Bibliographie du costume* (1933), nos. 2502, 2503.

[39] G. Paston, *Social Caricature in the 18th Century* (1905), pl. facing p. 10.

Figure 26.—Dressed print, ca. 1695. The engraving of Madame la Duchesse d'Aumont is embellished with small pieces of velvet, figured silk, and lace. *(Courtesy of The Pierpont Morgan Library.)*

Figure 27.—Fashion plate depicting a lady with her page being saluted by a gentleman. From the *Mercure de France*, March 1729. (*Courtesy of British Museum, London.*)

Figure 28.—Fashion plate, the first of the series *Recueil des differentes Modes du Temps*. The fabric of the dress on the right is a moiré or watered silk, on the left a "lace-pattern" brocade, often wrongly ascribed to the period of Louis XIII (1610–43). Issued by Herisset, ca. 1730. (Author's collection.)

Technical information together with some fashion plates was available in the 1760s in various volumes of the French *Encyclopédie*. M. de Garsault wrote the section on the art of the tailor (1769) as well as sections on wigs and wigmaking. The engravings by Jean Le Gros (fig. 29) were of practical use to hairdressers; a similar book of hairstyle by James Stewart was published in England.[40]

The single-sheet almanac decorated with engravings of contemporary events continued to be published in France in the 18th century,[41] but pictures in the English university almanacs were mainly topographical or historical. The next development was the issue of annual memorandum books or pocket diaries, which sometimes had a fashion plate as a frontispiece. For example, the *Ladies Museum or Pocket Memorandum Book*, 1774, contained an engraving of a "Lady in the most fashionable dress of the year 1773." This appeared not very long after the first production of Oliver Goldsmith's comedy *She Stoops to Conquer*, which contains the following dialogue (Act 2):

> Mrs. Hardcastle: Pray, how do you like this head, Mr. Hastings?
>
> Mr. Hastings: Extremely elegant and degagée, upon my word, Madam. Your friseur is a Frenchman, I suppose?
>
> Mrs. Hardcastle: I protest, I dressed it from a print in the ladies memorandum-book for the last year.

She Stoops to Conquer was written in 1772–73, and, although a memorandum book published at this date and containing fashion plates of headdresses has not been traced, it is very likely that one existed.

But before this, in 1770, *The Lady's Magazine or Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex* had begun its long career which lasted until 1837. Figure 30 shows a typical fashion plate for 1774. A lady in full court dress is talking to another in visiting dress; behind, a third in full dress but without side hoops talks to a friend in traveling dress with a calash hood; in the background a lady in riding dress looks out of the window. Artistically such a fashion plate is of no great distinction, but it served a purpose—to give information about current fashions—very much better than the more spectacularly illustrated productions such as Heideloff's *Gallery of Fashion*.

The 18th-century reading public became increasingly fashion conscious, and there are several series of French colored prints, the finest of them by Moreau le Jeune from 1775 onward, which have high artistic merit and have been sought continuously by collectors. Their purpose, however, was explicitly "pour servir à l'histoire des Modes et du Costume des Français dans le XVIII^me^ siècle." The prints are strongly romanticized and must be regarded as a record of something between historical and fancy dress. The accompanying text names but only briefly describes the dresses and then passes on to facetious moralizing.

In the same way in London in 1794, Nicolaus Heideloff, whose *Gallery of Fashion* was an imitation of one of the French series by Esnaut and Rapilly entitled *La Galleric des Modes*, though claiming that the dresses he described were real ones, seems to have

Figure 29.—Engraving by Jean le Gros depicting French hair style, ca. 1760. From *L'Art de la Coiffure*. (*Courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum, London.*)

[40] J. Le Gros, *L'Art de la coiffure* (1768). James Stewart, *Plocacosmos or the whole Art of Hairdressing* (1782).

[41] C. L. Regnault de Savigny, *Les almanachs illustrés du XVIII^me^ siècle* (1909).

Figure 30.—Plate showing fashionable dress at Weymouth. From *The Lady's Magazine*, 1774. (*Courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum, London.*)

Figure 31.—Print of a lady in a court dress ballooned out by side hoops, by N. Heideloff. The print does not attribute this fashion to any specific year. From the *Gallery of Fashion*, 1798. (*Courtesy of Victoria & Albert Museum, London.*)

had as an objective the formation of a sort of picture gallery of costume portraits of English ladies. Heideloff called it a Repository, which is what we would call an archive today, but the term came to be used by Rudolph Ackermann for his general magazine, *The Repository of the Arts* . . . , published between 1809 and 1828 (see p. 89). The ladies in Heideloff's aquatints are all different in the sense that they are dressed differently and doing different things, but the variations are mostly fanciful (fig. 31). In fact, the Heideloff prints served to fill picture books or to be pinned up or framed on walls; they do not differ greatly in their approach from the series of the Bonnarts and their contemporaries during the reign of Louis XIV.

It is not proposed to give an account here of the various magazines in the different countries which contained illustrated articles on fashion from 1770 onward, since this would merely repeat material in Mr. Vyvyan Holland's book. Mention should be made, however, of the movements for dress reform motivated either by economic considerations or national feeling. Pamphlets and articles on these subjects were usually without illustrations, except when concerned with the revival or creation of a national costume.[42] Sweden was the only country where, thanks to the enthusiasm of King Gustavus III, the wearing of national dress was more than an archaizing affectation. Dr. Eva Bergman [43] has described the origins of this Swedish national dress in a book that

[42] Justus Möser of Osnabruck, a prolific writer in the 1770s, discussed, in his *Patriotische Fantasien*, not only national dress but whether magazines should deal with ladies' fashions.

[43] Eva Bergman, *Nationella Drakten* (Stockholm, 1938).

Figure 32.—Front and back view of a walking dress showing that embroidered muslin was worn even in winter. Here, the muslin is accompanied by a red sarcenet Highland spencer and a matching scarf lined with ermine. From *La Belle Assemblée*, December 1808. (*Courtesy of The Cooper Union Museum.*)

Figure 33.—Walking dress of gray merino. Plate 38, Ackermann's *Repository of the Arts*, 1819. (*Courtesy of The Cooper Union Museum.*)

is fully documented with tailors' patterns and illustrations. As all details were prescribed by court regulations and very little scope was left for the impulses and personal choice of the wearers, the dress may be regarded to a great extent as a uniform rather than a fashion. Modifications did take place, however, and the style continued into the 19th century. As late as 1827, a pamphlet was published in Copenhagen on the same subject.[44]

With these dress-reform books must also be included the books on French Revolution fashions, of which that by Grasset de Saint-Sauveur is the best known.[45] When reading the descriptions of dress of the various officials, grades, and classes, one wonders whether such clothes were actually worn except on state occasions, or whether they were fanciful novelties which the French officials in their reaction against Louis XVI and his court thought would be appropriate for the new regime. The intention of this book, however, undoubtedly was serious and quite unlike the cari-

[44] J. C. Ryge, *Ideer til en national Smag i dansk Klaederdragt* (Copenhagen, 1827).

[45] Grasset de Saint-Sauveur, *Costume des Représentans du peuple* (Paris, 1795).

Figure 34.—Philadelphia fashions. At this date caps or hats were worn indoors with full evening dress. The details of this print were probably copied from a French or English fashion magazine. From *Godey's Lady's Book*, October 1833. (*Courtesy of The Cooper Union Museum.*)

cature fashion plates often titled "Merveilleuse" or "Incroyable," which amused everyone in the early years of the 19th century.

After 1800 many types of magazines flourished, and the increase in the number of lending and subscription libraries and also of public libraries fostered a new reading public. The magazines had illustrated fashion articles. Often the engravings, and later the lithographs, colored by hand, were their most attractive feature. Not that any great originality was shown; the latest Paris fashions were often adapted, with or without acknowledgment from French fashion plates of the previous season. Men's and children's fashions were not adapted on nearly the same scale. Possibly, men's fashions were more static, or confined to details such as variations in tying the cravat.[46]

Three magazines are worth special mention. *La Belle Assemblée, or Bell's Court and Fashionable Magazine* "addressed particularly to the ladies" was published in London from 1806 to 1868 (fig. 32). During the 1820s the plates were of less merit, but there was a later improvement. In 1809, the London print firm of Ackermann began to publish *The Repository of Arts, Letters, Commerce* and *Manufactures Fashion and Politics*. This magazine had a much wider scope, and its illustrations are of good quality (fig. 33). A special feature was the inclusion of small sample squares of new materials pasted into the text which named and described them. This feature usefully supplements industrial records of the period, which are hard to come by and difficult to handle in that those preserved are usually bulky, not too well dated, and show no distinction between fabrics made for export and those for the home market. Thirdly, from 1830 to 1898, *Godey's Lady's Book* was published in Philadelphia, under titles which varied from time to time (fig. 34). This magazine is much more famous for its other contents than for its fashion articles; its plates, often copied from French engravings, are of low quality and rather crudely colored.

The number, variation, and wide distribution of 19th-century fashion plates has proved something of a handicap to the historian in search of reliable information about dress. Mr. Holland has studied them from the artistic angle, tracing many of the French artists, who did not scorn fashion work. The relation of fashion plates to Victorian dresses as worn has been touched on by many costume writers,[47] but the relation of the fashion plate to the fashion house has yet to be studied; in particular, the large sheets put out by wholesale drapers and textile manufacturers and the advertisements of ready-made clothing that appear in magazines all through the 19th century have not yet been studied to full advantage.

This account of the fashion plate is necessarily incomplete, because its history and development has not been continuous, and new links may yet be found. The earlier period has been treated in greater detail because it is generally less well-known, and the boundaries between the fashion plate and the costume picture are not all easy to define. The fashion plate has died slowly, the victim of the photograph showing the model wearing actual clothes and the sketch giving the impression of a fashion artist at a dress show. Through the centuries, the fashion plate has provided the link between the wearer and the maker of clothes. It has also attracted as collectors those studying both the social background of a period and the history of costume.

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[46] H. Le Blanc, *The Art of Tying the Cravat*, 3rd ed. (1828). *The whole Art of Dress*, by a Cavalry officer (1830). Both of these small books contain fashion plates.

[47] Vyvyan Holland, op. cit. (footnote 1), chap. 5 ff. C. Willett Cunnington, *English Women's Clothing in the Nineteenth Century* (1937). James Laver, *Nineteenth Century Costume* (1947). C. H. Gibbs-Smith, *The Fashionable Lady in the 19th Century* (1960).

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Rembrandt's Etching Technique: An Example

Peter Morse

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FIGURE 1

Landscape with a hay barn and a flock of sheep.
Etching by Rembrandt, shown in original size.

By Peter Morse

Rembrandt's Etching Technique: An Example

A Rembrandt print in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution has been made the subject of a study of the artist's etching technique. The author is associate curator, division of graphic arts, in the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of History and Technology.

Rembrandt's print, *Landscape with a hay barn and a flock of sheep*,[1] is a singularly apt example of the variety of etching treatment used by the artist in his mature period.[2] The print, in black ink, 83 x 174 mm. in size (approximately 3½ x 7 inches), is signed and dated 1650.[3] It shows a peaceful Dutch landscape along the Onderdijk Road on the south side of the Saint Anthony's Dike, only a short walk from Rembrandt's home in Amsterdam. The picture is, as usual, the mirror reversal of the actual scene.[4]

The observer's attention, from his raised position, is first drawn to the center of the print, attracted by the bright highlights on the trees and barn, then is snapped abruptly to the left side by the figure of the woman outlined against the sky. Now the eye moves slowly across the bottom, noticing the flock of sheep and the shepherd, and is led further by the soft dark line of the creek bank, to pick up the distant town and then the cows on the right. Only after completely circling the composition does one notice the horse, rolling in the grass and joyfully kicking its feet in the air.

Such artistic command seldom comes spontaneously.

All footnotes appear at the end of this paper, commencing on page 105.

FIGURE 2

Mirror reversal of *Landscape with a hay barn and a flock of sheep.*

In Rembrandt's case, it is clearly the result of careful preparation, many years of learning and experience, and hard work in the creation of each picture. Such a process has produced in this print—one of nine landscapes which mark a turning point in 1650—a work of stylistic synthesis, which integrates Rembrandt's previous knowledge and leads on to his later masterpieces.

In 1650 Rembrandt was evidently in a tranquil state of mind. He was 44 years old. Young Hendrickje Stoffels, who had entered his household in 1645 as a maid, was well settled as housekeeper and mistress. Geertghe Dircx—who had been the nurse of Rembrandt's son, Titus, since the death of his wife, Saskia, in 1642—had just been taken to an institution after a nasty breach of promise suit.[5] Rembrandt's finances were in good shape; his insolvency was not to come until 1656, after the international economic crisis of 1653.[6] The artist certainly had the fullest confidence and experience in his working methods, having already done close to 250 prints.[7] This state of well-being is reflected in the fact that of the 27 prints Rembrandt did in the three years, 1650–1652, no fewer than 14 are landscapes of a serene character.[8] This is an unusually large proportion of a single subject and surely reflects the artist's state of mind, which helped him to produce this masterpiece of serenity, humor, and technical virtuosity.

His etching technique can be clearly studied in this print. In summary, all the evidence shows that Rembrandt here laid a foundation of lines on his plate with a single etching. He then mantled the sketch with rich drypoint lines, to give a sensitive chiaroscuro to the finished work. The integration of etching and drypoint is striking. There are few areas of this print (except the sky) that do not contain both kinds of line.

Rembrandt evidently had an excellent idea of his design before he ever touched the needle to the plate. Though he is often admired for his spontaneity, particularly in his landscapes,[9] this is a misconception. Benesch lists no fewer than 78 landscape drawings by Rembrandt in the years 1648–1650,[10] and there were perhaps many more, now lost or unidentified. For this etching alone, there are at least five likely preparatory drawings, each giving certain essential features of the final print. The most interesting is the *Landscape with a Rolling Horse.*[11] Here we see that the horse, apparently the happiest of impulsive inspirations, is instead a carefully considered part of the final design, copied from the drawing previously done on the spot. As the horse in the drawing is the mirror image of that in the print, we can feel certain

FIGURE 3

Landscape with a rolling horse. Drawing by Rembrandt. After Benesch, vol. 6. fig. 1444. (Smithsonian photo 59391, with the permission of Phaidon Press, Ltd., and the Groningen Museum.)

FIGURE 4

A clump of trees. Drawing by Rembrandt. After Benesch, vol. 4, fig. 1001. (Smithsonian photo 59392, with the permission of Phaidon Press, Ltd., and the Hermitage, Leningrad.)

FIGURE 5

Farm building among trees. Drawing by Rembrandt. (*Photo courtesy of the Albertina Museum, Vienna.*)

Farmstead with a hay barn. Drawing by Rembrandt. After Benesch, vol. 6, fig. 1458. (Smithsonian photo 59393, with the permission of Phaidon Press, Ltd., and the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Copenhagen.)

FIGURE 6

FIGURE 7

Farm buildings beside a road with distant farmstead. Drawing by Rembrandt. *(Photo courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.)*

that the drawing came first and not the etching. Two other drawings [12] (figures 4 and 5) delineate the clump of trees, in form and placement very similar to the print. A fourth [13] (figure 6) is a sketch of a hay barn of the type shown in the print, evidently quite common in the Dutch countryside, and a fifth [14] (figure 7) foreshadows the scheme of composition used in the print, principally the relationship of the road and the dark central mass. All these drawings are the mirror reversal of the print.

It is very much a modern taste to admire spontaneity more than craft. We must understand that Rembrandt's work was anything but spontaneous in execution. The existence of so many drawings prior to this print certainly suggests that Rembrandt collected his ideas from many sources, on the spot, but did his finished work in the quiet of his studio, with his notes ready at hand. He used the sketches as the raw material for a work of art. Rembrandt said that the only rule that should bind the artist is nature,[15] but he was certainly not distracted by nature. The individual genius here lies in assembling many observations from nature into a work which goes beyond nature and yet appears fresh and natural.

The metal plates he commonly used were of thin, cold-hammered copper, as shown by extant examples.[16] The hammering had the effect of making the metal harder than today's rolled copper sheets. This enabled more prints to be taken from the plate than is possible for a present-day printmaker. Today, we tend to consider drypoint a very fugitive medium, because the burr perishes so quickly under the pressure of the printing press. Rembrandt undoubtedly had fewer inhibitions about drypoint, for he could expect his harder copper to hold up longer, perhaps for as many as fifty excellent prints from the same plate. Hammered copper, unlike the modern rolled variety, is also completely free of grain in the metal. This enables a drypoint needle to move freely in any direction without encountering the resistance of a grain. Here again, Rembrandt had more incentive to use drypoint than a modern artist.

Rembrandt's etching ground has been the subject of considerable discussion. A book published in 1660, nine years before the artist's death, contains a recipe for "The Ground of Rinebrant of Rine."[17] This ground, similar to that described by Bosse as a "soft" ground,[18] consists of two parts wax, one part mastic, and one part asphaltum. There are countless formulae for such grounds, but virtually all are permutations of the same three ingredients, with only slight differences in the proportions.[19] The ground given as Rembrandt's is a thoroughly conventional one.

A knotty problem, however, is introduced by the last line of this 1660 description: ". . . lay your black ground very thin, and the white ground upon it. This is the only way of Rinebrant . . . ."[20] No elaboration is given. This one line presents a number of problems, not all of which are soluble. To take it at face value is to accept the contemporary evidence that Rembrandt not only used a white ground but used it exclusively. This assertion cannot be taken uncritically.

It will readily be seen that a white ground might be of considerable assistance to an artist. His needle penetrates the white to the copper, giving the familiar effect of a reddish ink line on white paper. A normal ground, without treatment, is virtually transparent, making the etcher's lines rather difficult to see.[21] The most usual procedure, both in the 17th century and today, is to smoke the ground and incorporate the soot with the ground by heating the plate slightly. This gives a black ground, against which the lines appear light, the negative of the ultimate print. The black ground is favored, both out of long-established tradition and because it is very easy to apply. Furthermore, artists today explain that they also enjoy the feeling of working slightly blind, that one of their greatest rewards is the sense of surprise in peeling the first proof print off the plate. For whatever reason, the black ground has been preferred by the great majority of artists, both past and present.

The description of Rembrandt's ground in 1660 takes knowledge of the white ground for granted. Its technique certainly appears to have been generally well known among artists in the middle of the 17th century. Rubens, in a letter as early as 1622, mentions having received a recipe for a white ground, although he could not remember it.[22] The first technical explanation of the process appeared in Bosse's pioneer treatise in 1645.[23] There is no reason why Rembrandt should not have known of the white-ground technique and every reason to suppose that he did.

There is one piece of strong evidence that he did use a white ground about 1631. One of Rembrandt's drawings exists which, unlike most of his sketches is an exact prototype (in reverse) of a specific etching, *Diana at the Bath*.[24] The back of this drawing is covered with black chalk, and its lines show the indentation of tracing. The only reasonable explanation of this evidence is that Rembrandt placed his prepared drawing on top of a white-grounded plate and traced the lines, depositing the black chalk lines on the ground, where he could then trace them with his etching needle. Another similarly indented drawing—for the portrait of Cornelis Claesz Anslo—has been held to show the same procedure as late as 1641. This drawing, however, is backed, not with black chalk as previously cited, but with ocher tempera.[25] Although surely used for tracing, this gives perhaps even more evidence of his use of a black ground rather than white, although ocher lines would show on either. These conclusions are not meant to imply in any way that Rembrandt used the tracing of a drawing for his *Landscape with a hay barn* . . . . There is every probability that he did not do so. The implication is rather that only where a traced drawing with black backing exists do we have circumstantial evidence for the use, and possibly a more general use, of white ground. Without the published recipe no question would be likely to arise that Rembrandt used anything but the standard black ground. With it, we must search for corroboration.

Though the case must be left as "not proven," the use of a white etching ground is consistent with Rembrandt's practice of using the simplest effective means for achieving his artistic aims. The distinctive quality of the print under consideration here is the artist's remarkable placement and articulation of areas of black against the white paper. Rembrandt may have found it far easier to visualize this ultimate effect by using a white background for dark lines on his plate, rather than the negative.

Rembrandt almost certainly made all the etched lines in this print in a single operation. The lines were put on the plate before it went into the acid. The plate was then etched by the acid in a single biting, without stopping-out. The evidence for these assertions comes from the print itself, as we have no direct testimony in the matter.

In the first place, the etched lines must be distinguished from the drypoint lines applied at a later stage. The differences between the types of line are more easily seen than described. The etched line is clear and strong, from the clean biting of the acid. It is freer and more autographic because it is drawn through a wax surface, not scratched in a resisting metal surface.

FIGURE 9

Detail of *Landscape with a hay barn and a flock of sheep*, left center, showing forceful lines of tree branch in pure drypoint. Enlarged 10 times. (Smithsonian photo 59390.)

The drypoint line, by its nature, is more abrupt and forceful, showing the quality of having been scratched rather than drawn. There are two basic drypoint lines, depending upon the position in which the drypoint needle is held. When it is vertical or nearly so, the resulting line is shallow and prints more weakly and distantly than the etched line.

FIGURE 8

Detail of *Landscape with a hay barn and a flock of sheep*, left center, showing light drypoint lines of the horizon and etched lines of figures and hillside. Enlarged 10 times. (Smithsonian photo 59384.)

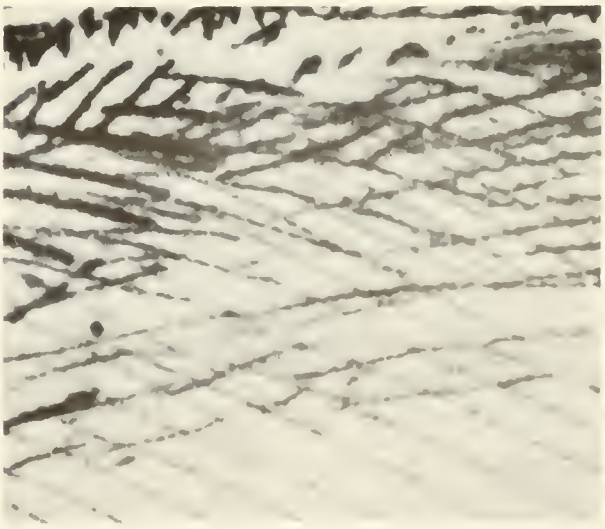

FIGURE 10

Detail of *Landscape with a hay barn and a flock of sheep*, center, showing diagonal lines of light drypoint without burr. Enlarged 10 times. (Smithsonian photo 59385.)

When the needle is pulled at an angle of about 30° to 60°, a very perceptible furrow of copper burr is thrown up on one or both sides of the line on the plate. This burr holds more ink than the clear channel and prints with a highly distinctive inky richness. Basically, etching removes metal from the plate entirely, whereas drypoint displaces it in furrows of burr. The rich fuzzy line produced by the burr is what we most typically associate with drypoint work. The first sort, the thin distant line, is nevertheless just as truly drypoint as the latter and is distinguishable by its forcefulness and clear direction.[26] The same line may also be created, with slightly more work, by using a scraper to remove the burr from a rich drypoint line.

FIGURE 11

Detail of *Landscape with a hay barn and a flock of sheep*, bottom right, showing rich drypoint lines with burr. Enlarged 10 times. (Smithsonian photo 59386.)

Another way of making lines in a plate is with a burin—an instrument with a sharp triangular point—which is pushed through the copper, instead of being pulled, as is the drypoint needle. When used conventionally, the burin produces a very characteristic hard, controlled printed line, one which does not appear in this print. When used lightly, however, its line is virtually indistinguishable from that of the vertical drypoint needle. It is quite possible that Rembrandt used the burin in some of his work on this and other prints, but it seems a somewhat less likely tool than the drypoint. First, the non-etched lines in this print seem to have a more freely moving quality than could probably be produced with a burin, a rather stiff, if extremely precise tool. Second, when Rembrandt was commissioned in 1665 to engrave a portrait expressly with a burin, he found himself unable to do so.[27] His inability, however, may be attributed as easily to Rembrandt's artistic independence as to his inexperience with the burin. Rembrandt's general use of the burin has been widely accepted. The question may not be that simple. These visible differences, then, enable us to separate the kinds of line within this print.

The author has attempted, by tracing only the etched lines in the print, to recreate the state of the plate after Rembrandt's etching and before the application of drypoint (figure 12). It can be seen that Rembrandt's etched lines form only a foundation or skeleton for the finished work. It is in no sense complete in itself. More important, the picture lacks all the rich contrasts of light and shade which distinguish this print and most of Rembrandt's finished work.

It has been generally assumed that Rembrandt went through a fairly normal process of stopping-out and also re-etching in the course of his printmaking. The visual evidence would indicate that he did not follow this procedure here. Stopping-out is, of course, a means of creating variations in the printed intensity of etched lines. After a plate has etched for a certain time—depending on the artist's inclination—it may be removed from the acid and some of its lines covered with a stop-out varnish, similar in texture and acid resistance to the basic ground. The plate is then put back in the acid and the remaining lines etched more deeply. This can be repeated any number of times, giving a wide range of intensity to the various etched lines. No such wide range of etched lines appears in the finished print. Further, where the edge of applied stop-out varnish crosses a single line, the change in depth of acid biting at that point is readily visible. Again, no such change of depth of a single line is visible here. The inference, unless attributed to very long coincidence, seems probable that Rembrandt used only a single acid etch on the entire plate, with no stopping-out.

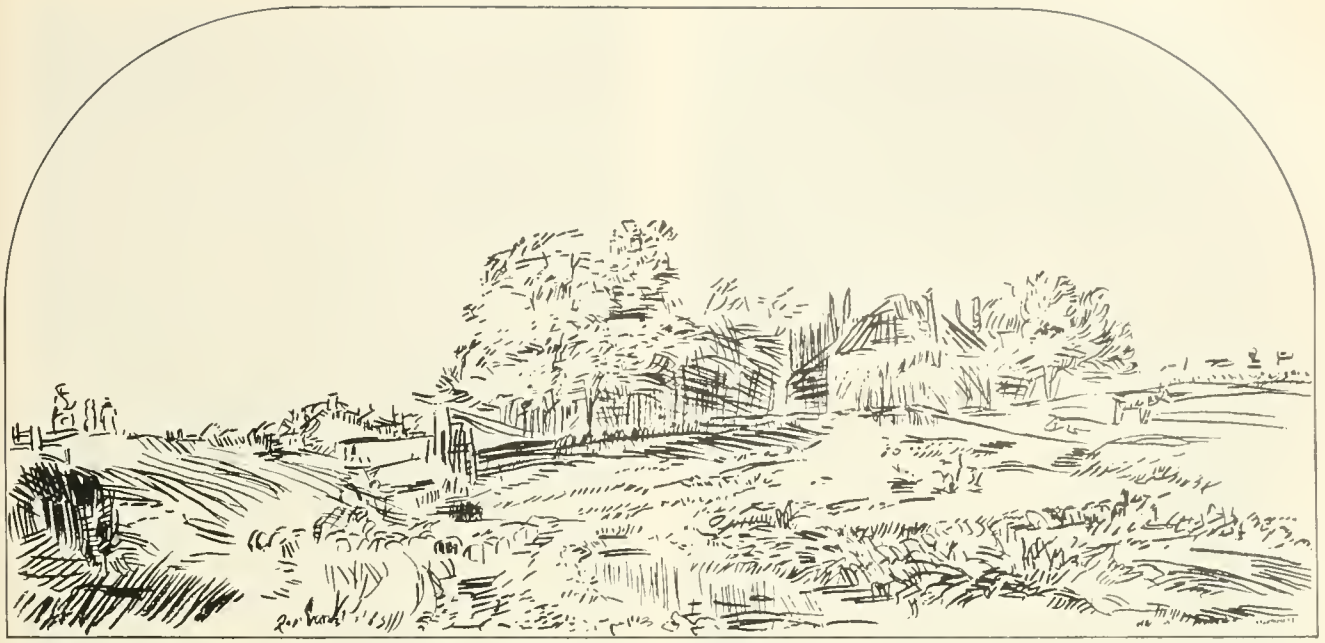

FIGURE 12

Traced sketch by the author, showing only the etched lines in Rembrandt's print, *Landscape with a hay barn and a flock of sheep.* (Smithsonian photo 59398.)

Re-etching also seems unlikely. If the original ground has been removed from a plate, the entire plate must be re-grounded, without smoking or whitening, so that the previously etched lines show through. Noticeably heavier etched lines appear at only a few places on this plate, principally in the grass at the lower right. It is probable that Rembrandt used a number of etching needles of different widths. We do not see the typical changes in the lines produced by stopping-out or re-etching. Re-etching of new lines crossing previously etched lines often causes a slight penetration of acid under the ground into the old lines. This shows in the printing as a dark spot at the point of crossing. Such an effect is not found in this print. A similar result in the cross-hatching at the lower left is caused instead by drypoint lines crossing etched lines.

No direct evidence has been found concerning the acid corrosive used by Rembrandt to bite his plate.[28] Only tentative conclusions can be drawn from this and other prints. The etched lines in the *Landscape with a hay barn* . . . appear to be bitten with a

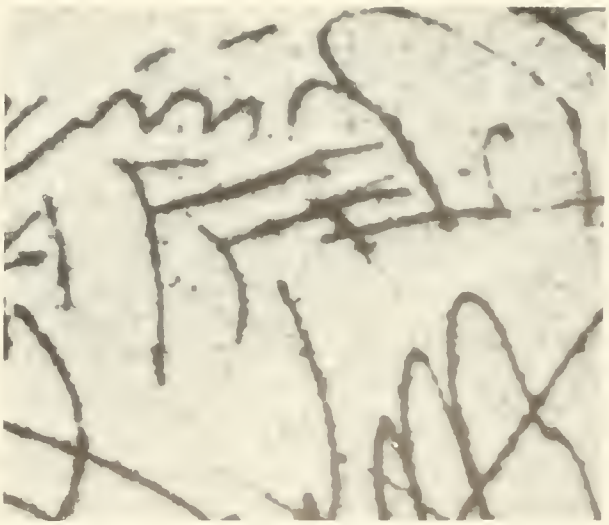

FIGURE 13

Detail of Rembrandt's finished print. *Landscape with a hay barn and a flock of sheep*, lower right, showing lines of pure etching. Enlarged 10 times. (Smithsonian photo 59387.)

FIGURE 14

Detail of the etched copper plate for Rembrandt's print, *Christ seated disputing with the doctors*. After Coppier, p. 117. (Smithsonian photo 59395.)

FIGURE 15

Detail of Rembrandt's finished print. *Landscape with a hay barn and a flock of sheep*, far right, showing drypoint drawing of sheep and post. Enlarged 10 times. (Smithsonian photo 59388.)

fairly strong acid. The lines are relatively broad in relation to their depth, a strong-acid effect. Furthermore, illustrations of some of Rembrandt's original plates from this period show a similar broad line.[29] In addition, in the photograph (figure 14) of at least one of the plates there is seen a peculiarly ragged line which is often caused by bubbles formed on the plate by acid action.[30] This appearance of bubbles is characteristic only of the strong acids. Of the acid formulae suggested by Bosse in 1645, only one—a distillate of vitriol, saltpeter, and alum—appears to be strong enough to produce the observed effects.[31] Generally speaking, Rembrandt's later etchings show evidence of stronger acid biting than his earlier work, which has more of the characteristics of weak mordants.[32] Certainly, a strong acid would produce a much speedier biting and bolder etched lines, providing him with a solid foundation for his fine drypoint work, and enabling him to work continuously, with a minimum of delay.

Rembrandt's use of drypoint is, as Jakob Rosenberg says, "the most important innovation in Rembrandt's mature graphic work."[33] After etching his skeletal design on the plate, he went to work with his drypoint needles—long, stiff, iron instruments—sharpened to a fine point. An artist generally has several available, so that he does not have to stop and re-sharpen in the course of his work. Rembrandt evidently went even further and deliberately used dull needles to obtain certain light line effects.

When the finished print is compared with the sketch of the etched lines alone, it can be seen how vital the drypoint is to Rembrandt's whole conception. The needle held vertically and slightly dulled, for instance, produced the light shadings on the central hillock at lower left. The sharp needle, held at an angle, threw up the burr which printed as the rich blacks on both sides of the hay barn, along the bank of the stream, and on the road at left center. The sheep and post at the far right were completely drawn

FIGURE 16

Detail of Rembrandt's finished print, *Landscape with a hay barn and a flock of sheep*, showing shepherd in drypoint, erased figures behind flock, signature, and date. Enlarged 5 times. (Smithsonian photo 59389.)

with drypoint, as was the shepherd of the flock at left center (figure 16). It is interesting to note that the flock originally had two shepherds, evidently a man and a woman, standing at the center of the road and behind the flock.[34] These figures were drawn in the ground and etched in the first stage of the print. Rembrandt then must have decided that their proportion was wrong for his composition. He reworked the area, using a scraper or burnisher to flatten out his etched lines, and covered the remaining ghosts of the figures with a mesh of drypoint cross-hatching. He then added the single small figure of the shepherd boy entirely in drypoint.

Houbraken, writing in 1718, talked of Rembrandt's technical secrets, "which he would not let his pupils see."[35] In truth, there are no secrets to this artist's *technique* in the etching medium. But his mastery of the *art* goes far beyond communicable secrets.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Hind 241 (A. M. Hind, *A Catalogue of Rembrandt's Etchings*, 2 vol., rev. ed., London, 1923), Bartsch 224 (Adam Bartsch, *Catalogue raisonne de toutes les estampes . . . de Rembrandt . . .*, Vienna, 1797). The particular example studied here is an impression of the second state (of two) in the collection of the United States National Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

The author wishes to express his deepest gratitude to Jacob Kainen, curator of graphic arts at the Smithsonian Institution, for his acute knowledge, unfailing helpfulness, and encouragement in the preparation of this paper.

[2] P. G. Hamerton, for one, calls special attention to the technical importance of this print: "I recommend the student to familiarize himself with the workmanship of this plate . . . ." (*The Etchings of Rembrandt*, London, 1894, p. 71.)

[3] The date is unquestionably difficult to read. Bartsch misread it as 1636 (op. cit., p. 148). Charles Middleton (*Descriptive Catalogue of the Etched Work of Rembrandt van Ryn*, London, 1878, p. 299) was the first to identify the date as 1650. This has been accepted by all modern authorities except George Biörklund (*Rembrandt's Etchings: True and False*, Stockholm, 1955, no. 52–A, p. 103) who reads it as 1652. This seems unlikely to me, not only on the great stylistic affinity of this print to Rembrandt's unquestioned works of 1650, but also on the basis of my own reading of the date. The presumed digit "2" is quite unlike the "2" in Hind's 257 and 263, Rembrandt's only dated prints of 1652. (*See* figure 16.)

[4] The general location of this scene, as well as many others in Rembrandt's oeuvre, has been identified by Frits Lugt (*Mit Rembrandt in Amsterdam*, Berlin, 1920, pp. 136–140, revised from the original Dutch, *Wandelingen met Rembrandt in en om Amsterdam*, Amsterdam, 1915; *see also* Lugt, "Rembrandt's Amsterdam," *Print Collector's Quarterly*, April 1915, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 111–169, and the attached map).

[5] Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, ed., *Die Urkunden über Rembrandt (1575–1721)*, The Hague, 1906. On the lawsuit, see nos. 113, 117, 118, 120–3, 130, and 165. Geertghe was taken to the institution on July 4, 1650.

[6] On the financial troubles, starting in 1653, see ibid., nos. 140 ff.

[7] The exact number is, of course, impossible to determine,

because of many uncertainties of attribution and dating. A. M. Hind, op. cit., lists 236 prints before the year 1650, which seems as accurate a count as is possible.

[8] According to Hind, op. cit., the 14 landscapes nos. 237–260 and 262–264 are attributable to the years 1650–52. Of the 27 prints from these three years, 16 are actually signed and dated by Rembrandt. Nine of these 16 are landscapes.

[9] E.g., C. J. Holmes, "The Development of Rembrandt as an Etcher," *Burlington Magazine* (August 1906), vol. 9, no. 41, p. 313. The well-known story of his having drawn "Six's Bridge" (Hind 209) on the plate while the servant went for the mustard is also often cited (e.g., Hind, op. cit., p. 95), but if true appears to be atypical.

[10] Otto Benesch, *The Drawings of Rembrandt*, 6 vol., London, 1954–57.

[11] Benesch no. 1225, Groningen (Netherlands) Museum, inv. no. 210, dated about 1650, the wash added by another hand. This drawing was formerly in the personal collection of Cornelis Hofstede de Groot and was first reproduced and discussed by Otto Hirschmann in "Die Handzeichnungen-Sammlung Dr. Hofstede de Groot im Haag, II," *Der Cicerone* (Leipzig, January 1917), vol. 9, no 1/2, pp. 21–22.

[12] Benesch 850, *A Clump of Trees*, The Hermitage, Leningrad, about 1648–50, and Benesch 1246, *Farm Building Among Trees*, Albertina, Vienna, inv. no. 8873, Hofstede de Groot 1497 (*Die Handzeichnungen Rembrandts . . .*, Haarlem, 1906), about 1650–51.

[13] Benesch 1236, *Farmstead with a Hay Barn*, Copenhagen, about 1650.

[14] Benesch 1226, *Farm Buildings Beside a Road with Distant Farmstead*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Hofstede de Groot 1138, about 1650, with later additions. Ludwig Münz (*Rembrandt's Etchings*, 2 vols., London, 1952, no. 159, vol. 2, p. 84) cites two drawings, one in the Ashmolean, one in the University Gallery, Oxford. Since the two museums are now one and the same, Münz appears to have confused two listings of the same drawing. Mr. Hugh Macandrew of the Ashmolean Museum has very kindly confirmed, in a letter to the author, that in their collection there is only the one drawing which is similar to this print. There is yet another drawing, *Farm with Hay Barn*, in the Bonnat collection at the Louvre, Paris, Hofstede de Groot 764, which is cited by Hind as a study sketch. Though very similar to this print, in reverse, it is considered a school piece by both Lugt and Benesch. It is quite possible that one of Rembrandt's pupils accompanied him on his walks and sketched many of the same subjects as the master. The drawing reproduced in Lugt, *Mit Rembrandt . . .*, op. cit., fig. 87, is also not by Rembrandt.

[15] Joachim von Sandrart, a former pupil of Rembrandt, writing in 1675, quoted in Hofstede de Groot, *Die . . . Urkunden*, op. cit., no. 329, p. 392.

[16] The plate for the print under discussion here is not known to have survived. There are, however, still some 79 Rembrandt plates whose present locations are known. Of these, 75 are in the collection of Robert Lee Humber, on deposit at the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, North Carolina. These are discussed at some length by André Charles Coppier (*Les eaux-fortes de Rembrandt*, Paris, 1922, pp. 94–96). He gives the chemical content of the plate for the *Presentation in the Temple* (Hind 162, about 1640), as 95% copper with impurities of tin, lead, zinc, arsenic, and silver. This may presumably be taken as typical. Münz, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 47, gives a listing of the surviving plates, but mistakenly presumes the Humber plates to be in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. As a matter of interest, the plate of the print, *The Gold-Weigher* (Hind 167), said by Münz to be in the Rosenwald collection, Philadelphia, is not and never has been in that collection. It is completely unknown to Mr. Lessing J. Rosenwald and his curator. Its present whereabouts is unknown to the author.

[17] *The Whole Art of Drawing, Painting, Limning, and Etching. Collected out of the Choicest Italian and German Authors . . . . Originally invented and written by the famous Italian Painter Odoardo Fialetti, Painter of Boloign. Published for the Benefit of all ingenuous Gentlemen and Artists by Alexander Brown Practitioner. London, Printed for Peter Stint at the Signe of the White Horse in Giltspurre Street, and Simon Miller at the Staire in St. Paul's Churchyard, MDCLX.* Page 33. London, 1660. Quoted by Münz, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 208, who first discovered the reference. Since Fialetti died in 1638, the reference to Rembrandt's ground is likely to be by Brown or an anonymous contemporary editor.

[18] Abraham Bosse, *Traicté des manieres de graver en taille douce . . .*, Paris, 1645, p. 41. Bosse's soft-ground formula, for comparison's sake, is three parts wax, two parts mastic, and one part asphaltum, which is very close to the cited Rembrandt ground.

[19] Numerous similar grounds are given in E. S. Lumsden, *The Art of Etching* (London: Seeley Service and Co., 1924); reprint (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1962), pp. 35–38.

[20] Loc. cit. (footnote 17).

[21] Some etchers, however, prefer this effect. Cf. Lumsden, op. cit., p. 42.

[22] Münz, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 13, quotes this letter without giving the source. Evidently this is the first written reference to white ground.

[23] Op. cit., pp. 46–48. Knowledge of the process seems to have disappeared completely during the 18th and 19th centuries. Hubert Herkomer, writing in 1892, believed that he had invented the white ground for the first time (*Etching and Mezzotint Engraving*, London, 1892, pp. 4 and 25).

[24] The etching is Hind 42. The drawing (Benesch 21, Hofstede de Groot 893) is in the British Museum. The black chalk has been confirmed (see footnote 25). It is also clear that the backing is not graphite, which would, of course, show up on a black ground as well as a white one.

[25] The etching is Hind 187. The drawing (Benesch 758, Hofstede de Groot 896) is in the British Museum. Some scholarly misinformation has unfortunately been passed on for years. Münz, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 65, cites Jan Six ("Rembrandt's Vorbereiding . . . ," *Onze Kunst*, 1908, II, p. 53), who in turn cites the personal observation of A. M. Hind of the British Museum, to the effect that this drawing of Anslo was backed with black chalk. The two drawings had apparently not been lifted from their mounts in something like sixty years. In answer to the author's inquiry, Mr. J. K. Rowlands, Assistant Keeper, Department of Prints and Drawings, the British Museum, very kindly wrote: "I can now tell you about the backs of H. 42 and H. 187 [that is, the drawings for these two prints], which have now been lifted. The reverse of *The Woman Bathing* [*Diana at the Bath*] has the remains of black unrefined chalk upon it and the portrait of Anslo is backed with Ochre tempera. I think this news will interest you." I am most

grateful to Mr. Rowlands and his staff for their trouble and kindness.

[26] An excellent example of this type of line is seen in the horizon lines on the left, which in this case were added only after several proofs had been pulled from the plate. The addition of these lines constitutes the difference between the recorded first and second states of this print.

[27] The documents on this story were first published by Bredius in 1909 ("Rembrandt als Plaatsnijder," *Oud-Holland*, v. 27, pp. 112 f.) and have been frequently cited since then. The print is the portrait of Jan Antonides van der Linden (Hind 268).

[28] Confusion has arisen over a note, clearly in Rembrandt's hand, on one of his drawings (Benesch 1351, Hofstede de Groot 763, dated about 1654–55). The Dutch text is given in Benesch, op. cit., vol. 6, p. 374. It reads, "In order to etch . . . ," and gives a recipe consisting of turpentine and turpentine oil. This, of course, could not possibly be a mordant. Münz discusses it (op. cit., vol. 2, p. 14) and concludes that with the addition of mastic, this could be a kind of stop-out varnish. We are not likely to come closer to an answer for this cryptic inscription.

[29] Coppier, op. cit.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 117. Detail of plate for Hind 277, dated 1654.

[31] Bosse, op. cit., pp. 5 and 11. Vitriol is copper or iron sulfate, saltpeter is potassium nitrate, and alum is an aluminum sulfate salt. Bosse's other two acids are distilled pure vinegar (acetic acid) and a boiled mixture of vinegar and chloride salts. Both are relatively weak. My thanks to Dr. Robert P. Multhauf for his advice on 17th-century chemistry.

[32] Felix Brunner (*A Handbook of Graphic Reproduction Processes*, New York: Hastings House, 1962, p. 124), suggests that Rembrandt may have used ferric chloride, a weaker mordant, around 1640.

[33] Rosenberg, *Rembrandt: Life and Work* (London: Phaidon Press, rev. ed., 1964), p. 330.

[34] My gratitude to Jacob Kainen for first pointing out the existence of these disembodied spirits.

[35] Arnold Houbraken, quoted in Hofstede de Groot, *Die Urkunden* . . . , op. cit., no 407, p. 471.

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WHITE HOUSE CHINA OF THE LINCOLN ADMINISTRATION IN THE MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND TECHNOLOGY

Margaret Brown Klapthor

Smithsonian Press

Washington, D.C.

1967

WHITE HOUSE COLLECTION

Figure 1.—A TABLE SETTING showing the Lincoln china being used for a luncheon during the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Margaret Brown Klapthor

WHITE HOUSE CHINA OF THE LINCOLN ADMINISTRATION

In the Museum of History and Technology

This article on the china of the administration of President Abraham Lincoln is intended to be the first of a series of articles on Presidential china based on the collection in the Smithsonian Institution. From contemporary records in National Archives, newspaper articles and family records it is our hope to assemble material which will ultimately present the story of White House and Presidential china of every administration. Myths and facts surrounding this interesting topic will be examined and presented to assist the many collectors of this porcelain as well as others who admire and appreciate its historical interest.

In this first article, the author describes the efforts of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln to acquire porcelain suitable for official entertaining in the White House.

THE AUTHOR: *Margaret Brown Klapthor is associate curator of political history in the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of History and Technology.*

WHEN MRS. LINCOLN ARRIVED at the White House in 1861 she found the pantry sadly deficient in elegant tableware to set a State dinner. The last official State service had been purchased by the White House during the administration of President Franklin Pierce (it is the china known popularly as the "red edge" set), and not enough of that was left to serve a large dinner party.

Theodore R. Davis, who designed the State china purchased during the administration of President Rutherford B. Hayes, wrote an article, published in the May 1899 issue of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, on the "Presidential Porcelain of a Century." He records that in 1860 he saw the State Dining Room of the White House set up for the formal dinner given for the visiting Prince of Wales, and that "the dishes

were more or less odd, but generally comprised what was known as the 'red edge set'."

Chinaware was not the only thing needed in the Executive Mansion in the opinion of Mary Todd Lincoln. Fortunately for her, Congress was accustomed to appropriating $20,000 to refurnish the President's House to the taste of each new First Lady. This money became available to her when the special session was convened in April 1861, and Mrs. Lincoln set out the next month on a shopping trip to New York and Philadelphia. She was accompanied by a favorite cousin, Mrs. Elizabeth Todd Grimsley, who had come to Washington for the inauguration in March and stayed on at the White House with the Lincolns for six months.

The ladies' arrival in New York City on May 12, was duly noted in the city newspaper. On May 16, 1861, *The New York Daily Tribune* records under the heading *Personal:*

> Mrs. Lincoln employed the greater portion of Wednesday forenoon in making purchases. Among other places she visited the establishments of Lord & Taylor, and Messrs. E. V. Haughwout and Co. At the latter establishment she ordered a splendid dinner service for the White House in "Solferino" and gold with the arms of the United States emblazoned on each piece. The purchases also include some handsome vases and mantle ornaments for the blue and green rooms.

The firm of E. V. Haughwout and Co. whose bill head identifies it as "Importers and Decorators of French China" was accustomed to Executive Mansion patronage. Under the name of Haughwout and Dailey they had sold a dinner service to President Pierce in 1853.[1] During Mrs. Lincoln's May visit, Haughwout's must have shown her a handsome specimen plate they had exhibited at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in New York in 1853 which had been made for President Pierce's approval. A picture of the plate in the Haughwout and Dailey display is shown in the catalog of the Exhibition where it is identified as "a specimen plate of a dinner service manufactured for the President of the United States with the American eagle and blue band in Alhambra style."[2] President Pierce evidently did not like the design as the service he subsequently purchased from Haughwout and Dailey had a plain red band and was not the one manufactured for his approval and exhibited in New York.

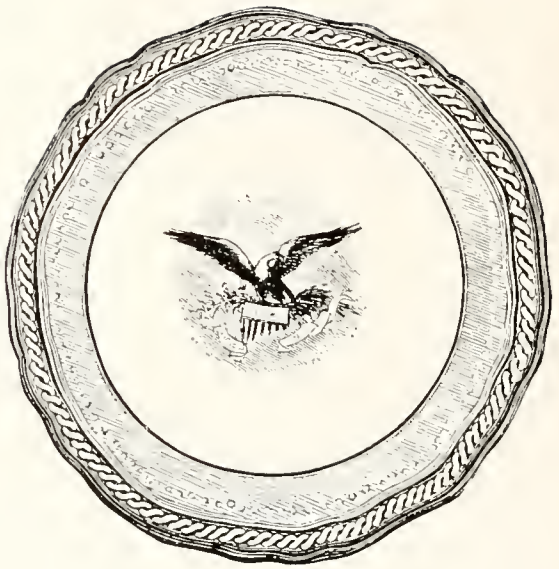

Figure 2.—PLATE ILLUSTRATED in the catalog of the Crystal Palace Exhibition, 1853. (Smithsonian photo 60016.)

Mary Todd Lincoln was delighted with the plate displayed at the Crystal Palace Exhibition and ordered a complete dinner service of that design. Her only charge was to have a wide "Solferino" border painted on the service instead of the blue border specified for the 1853 plate. This bright purplish-red color had become extremely fashionable since its discovery in 1859, and it provided another variation of Mrs. Lincoln's favorite color, which she indulged in personal attire as well as in room decor.

Mrs. Lincoln probably first saw and gave her approval to the elegant new china when she returned to New York for more shopping in August. The china was delivered on September 2, 1861, with a bill itemized as follows:[3]

> One fine Porcelain Dining Service of One Hundred, and ninety pieces . . . 190 . . . decorated Royal purple, and double gilt, with the Arms of the United States, on each piece, for the Presidential Mansion . . . . namely . . . .

[1] National Archives, Record group 217, Government Accounting Office, miscellaneous Treasury accounts, receipted account 113810, voucher 4.

[2] *Official catalog of the New York exhibition of the industry of all nations*, 1853. New York, 1853.

[3] National Archives, record group 217, General Accounting Office, miscellaneous Treasury accounts, receipted account 141451.

Figure 3.—PLATE, COMPOTE, AND SMALL PLATTER from the purple-bordered State china used during the administration of President Abraham Lincoln. (USNM acc. 221233; Smithsonian photo 48115-A.)

Two Bowls for Salad
Four Shells do Pickles
Four Meat Platters 9 inch
Four do do 10 do
Four do do 13 do
Two do do 15 do
Two do do 18 do
Two do do 20 do
Four Fish do various sizes, and forms
Two Butter Dishes, with drainers, and covers.
Six uncovered vegetable dishes or bakers.
Ninety-six Dinner Plates 9 inch
Forty-eight Soup do 9 do
Four Large Water Pitchers.
Two Bowls for Ice.

Eleven Hundred, and ninety-five dollars.

One fine Porcelain Dessert Service, consisting of Two hundred and eight pieces . . . . 208 . . richly decorated to match Dining Set . . . . namely.
Two Stands for Custard Cups
Thirty-six . . . do do
Eight High Comportiers for fruit.
Two do do large do do
Four shell do
Two Bowls for Strawberries
Two Dessert Sugars
Six Round High Baskets for fruit.
Two Oval do do do do
Sixty Dessert Plates 8 inch
Thirty-six after Dinner Coffees.

Eight Hundred, and thirty-seven dollars.

One fine Breakfast, and Tea Service, containing Two Hundred, and sixty pieces, richly decorated to match Dinner Service . . . . namely.
Forty-eight Tea Plates 6½ inch
Thirty-six Preserve do 4½ do
Thirty-six Coffees for Breakfast
Twenty-four Egg Cups
Thirty-six Teas
Eight Plates for Cake

Seven Hundred, and fifty nine dollars.

Four Small Sevres Centre Pieces for Bon Bons, decorated to match Dinner Service @ Twenty-five = One Hundred
Two Large Centre Pieces, Sevres, supported by "White Pelicans and decorated to match dinner service
@ One Hundred = Two Hundred
Two Punch Bowls, decorated to match dinner service
@ Fifty = One Hundred
Packages Four Dollars

Total Amount
Three Thousand, one Hundred and Ninety-five dollars.

The picture of the design presented for President Pierce's inspection in 1853 which appears in the catalog of the New York Crystal Palace Exhibition[4] is proof of the readiness with which symbolism is read into a design which came into existence long

[4] Loc. cit. (footnote 2).

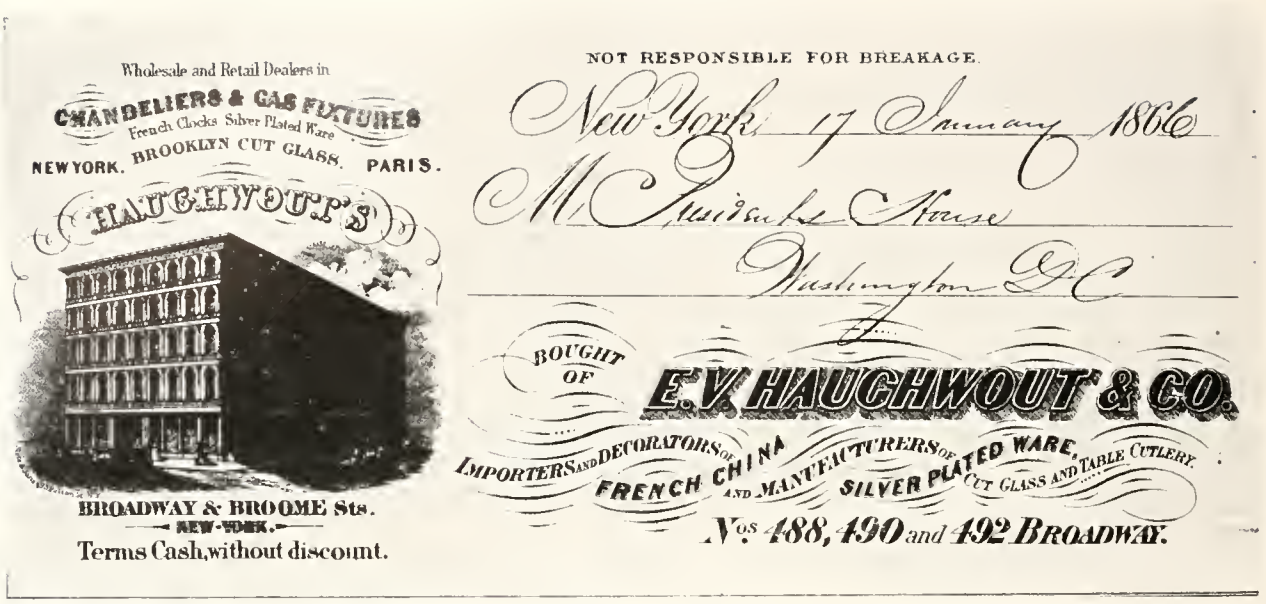
Wholesale and Retail Dealers in
CHANDELIERS & GAS FIXTURES
French Clocks Silver Plated Ware
NEW YORK. BROOKLYN CUT GLASS. PARIS.
HAUGHWOUT'S
BROADWAY & BROOME Sts.
NEW-YORK.
Terms Cash, without discount.
NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR BREAKAGE.
New York 17 January 1866
M. Lincoln House
Washington D.C.
BOUGHT OF
E.V. HAUGHWOUT & CO.
IMPORTERS AND DECORATORS OF FRENCH CHINA
AND MANUFACTURERS OF SILVER PLATED WARE, CUT GLASS AND TABLE CUTLERY
Nos 488, 490 and 492 BROADWAY.

Figure 4.—Letterhead of E. V. Haughwout & Co., from whom the purple set was ordered. (Smithsonian photo 60001-A.)

before the symbol is appropriate. Writing in 1895 Edwin Atlee Barber says of the Lincoln China that the design for the decoration, selected after much consultation among officials at Washington, was added in New York by the importer. It consisted of a spirited rendering of the arms of the United States—the American eagle mounted on the national shield and beneath it the motto *E Pluribus Unum*. This design was engraved and then transferred to the china as an outline to be filled in with color. The border of the plate, a gold guilloche, or cable, of two strands entwined and, thus, mutually strengthening each other, was intended to signify the union of the North and South.[5] The same idea was meant to be conveyed in the central design: "Though clouds surround our Country, the sunlight is breaking through." The explanation of the symbolism of the design, while appropriate for the Lincoln Administration, could hardly have been true for the china which was originally designed for Presidential use in 1853.

Tradition identifies the blanks on which the design of the Lincoln china was painted as being imported from the Haviland factory in Limoges, France. The original china bears no maker's mark, however, as this was more than ten years before the Haviland factory started to mark their ware.[6] The earliest positive link of the Lincoln china to Haviland and Company seems to be an affidavit which Theodore R. Davis attached to a Lincoln plate in 1881 saying "This plate One of the Lincoln Set made by Haviland & Co. was used by President Garfield when upon his death bed. The plate was broken in bringing it from the President's room and was given by Wm. Crump to Theo. R. Davis Sept. 1881." The plate is now in the collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. It is possible that Theodore Davis,

[5] Edwin Atlee Barber, "The Pioneer of China Painting in America," *The Ceramic Monthly* (September 1895), vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 15–20.

[6] Letter from Charles Haviland at Limoges, France, to Theodore Haviland in the United States dated March 4, 1869, in the archives of Haviland & Co., Inc.: "It would certainly be a good thing to stamp all our china with our name if: 1st our china was better than any one else or at least as good and 2nd if we made enough for our trade. Without that it would turn against us and learn people that by ordering through Vogt or Nittal they could get Gibus or Julieus china which is better than ours. And if ours was the best but we did not make enough to fill orders there would be a complaint when we gave other manufacturer's china. So our first aim must be to manufacture as well or better than any body else and to make all we sell—— *Then & then only* it will be a capital thing to stamp all our make with our name." Their goal was finally achieved in 1876.

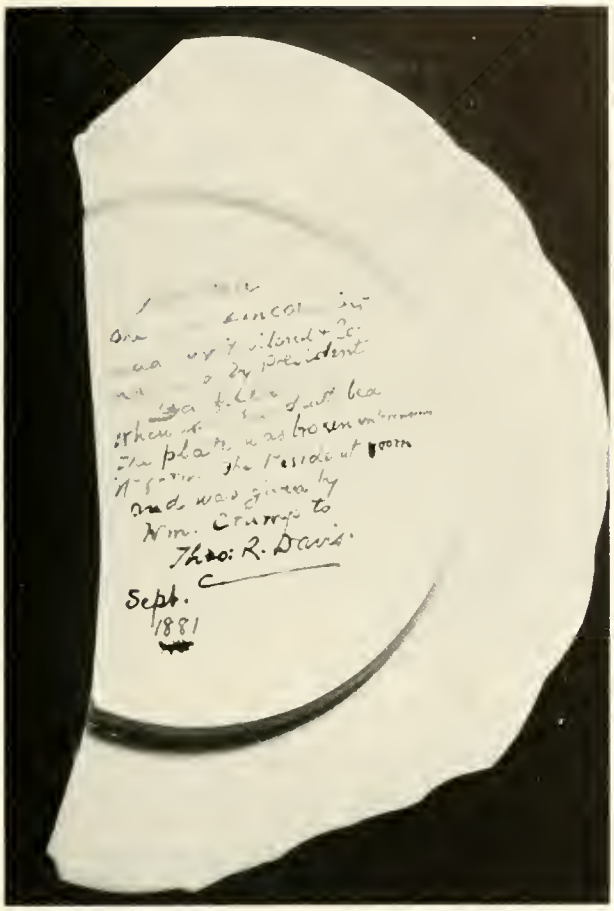

Figure 5.—Lincoln plate which bears affidavit of Theodore R. Davis. (*Courtesy of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.*)

a personal friend of Theodore Haviland, had derived directly from Mr. Haviland this manufacturer identification of the china which Haughwout decorated.

The official dinner service so delighted Mrs. Lincoln that she ordered a similar set for herself. On the personal service the initials "M. L." were substituted for the arms of the United States as decoration. Mrs. Grimsley says ". . . this latter, I know, was not paid for by the district commissioner, as was most unkindly charged when it was stored away." [7] It has been suggested that the personal china was

[7] Elizabeth Todd Grimsley, "Six Months in the White House," *Journal, Illinois State Historical Society*, vol. 19, nos. 3–4, pp. 42–73.

Figure 6.—Custard cup From the Purple-Bordered State China used during the administration of President Abraham Lincoln. (USNM acc. 206542; Smithsonian photo 44120-G.)

paid for by a withdrawal of $1106.73 from the President's account with the bank of Riggs and Co.

The personal china was an indiscreet purchase, at best, and Mrs. Lincoln was soon accused of buying the china out of public funds. In the midst of the campaign in which Lincoln ran for re-election in 1864 an opposition newspaper, *The New York World*, published a bitter attack on the President and his wife charging that the bill submitted by Haughwout for the State service had been padded to include the cost of the personal china.[8] According to the paper's editorial, the deceit was discovered when the amount of the bill was questioned by a clerk in the Treasury Department and "Honest Abe," when cornered, made payment out of his own pocket. This story seems to be refuted by the evidence on the Haughwout bill, which was signed by the Comptroller for payment on September 16, 1861, within two weeks after the china was received, and only three after President Lincoln had approved the bill.

The extent to which this controversy spoiled Mrs. Lincoln's pleasure in the handsome purple service perhaps can be measured by the fact that after President Lincoln was re-elected, she purchased another large china service for the White House. A bill, recently discovered at the National Archives,

[8] *The New York World*, September 26, 1864.

documents the new set as being ordered by Mrs. Lincoln from J. K. Kerr of 529 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, whose establishment, known as China Hall, specialized in French and English china and glassware. Dated January 30, 1865, the bill was for: [9]

1 Extra Large French China, Dining, Dessert and Coffee Service, decorated on a White ground, delicate Buff Border with burnished Gold lines consisting of the following pieces.

12 Dozen Dining plates	
6 Dozen Soup plates	
6 Dozen Dessert plates	
6 Dozen Ice Cream, or peaches & cream plates deep	
1 Large dish for head of table	
1 Foot dish	
2 Second course head & foot dishes	
2 more dishes	
2 more dishes	
2 more dishes	
4 vegetable dishes with covers	
4 more vegetable dishes with covers	
4 Sauce tureens	$1700
4 Sauce Boats	
4 Stands for Sauce Boats	
4 Pickle Shells	
2 Salad Bowls	
2 Custard Stands	
48 Custard Cups with covers	
2 Large rich oval fruit Baskets	
4 Smaller round do	
4 Fruit Comports Shell form for fruit	
4 do do high round	
2 Dessert Sugar bowls with covers	
48 After Dinner Coffee Cups & Saucers	
1 Large Dish for Fish	

Records show that the china was brought to Washington by Harnden Express, as there is a voucher "For freight on 5 casks from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Washington, D.C., mkd Mrs. A. Lincoln $28.50. China from J. Kerr Phila. Pa. for dinner." It is signed "J. K. Kerr" "Mrs. Lincoln" and is dated February 13, 1865.[10]

Two weeks later, on February 28, Kerr sent a bill

Figure 7.—Coffee cup From the Purple-Bordered State China used by President Abraham Lincoln at dinner at the White House on the night of his assassination. (USNM acc. 219098; Smithsonian photo 45088-D.)

for some additions to the service as follows: [11]

2 Dozen Coffee Cups & Saucers Delicate Buff Border & Gilt				20 00	40.00
4 Water pitchers		do	do	10 00	40.00
4 do	smaller	do	do	8 00	32 00
4 do	do	do	do	6.00	24 00
4 do	do	do	do	5 00	20 00
6 bowls		do	do	2.50	15.00
	Package				2.50
					173.50

Two months later President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. The china so recently ordered could hardly have been used by Mrs. Lincoln, and evidently payment had not been made, for it is recorded that at one of the first conferences which B. B. French, Commissioner of Public Buildings and Grounds, had with President Johnson in April 1865, he sought the President's approval of payment for a purchase of china by Mrs. Lincoln.[12]

Despite Commissioner French's concern, the account was not completely settled until a year after the china had been delivered. The first bill is receipted as paid

[9] National Archives, record group 217, General Accounting Office, miscellaneous Treasury accounts, receipted account 157178, voucher 9.

[10] Ibid., voucher 26.

[11] Ibid., voucher 25.

[12] George Fort Milton, *The Age of Hate: Andrew Johnson and the Radicals* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1930), p. 229.

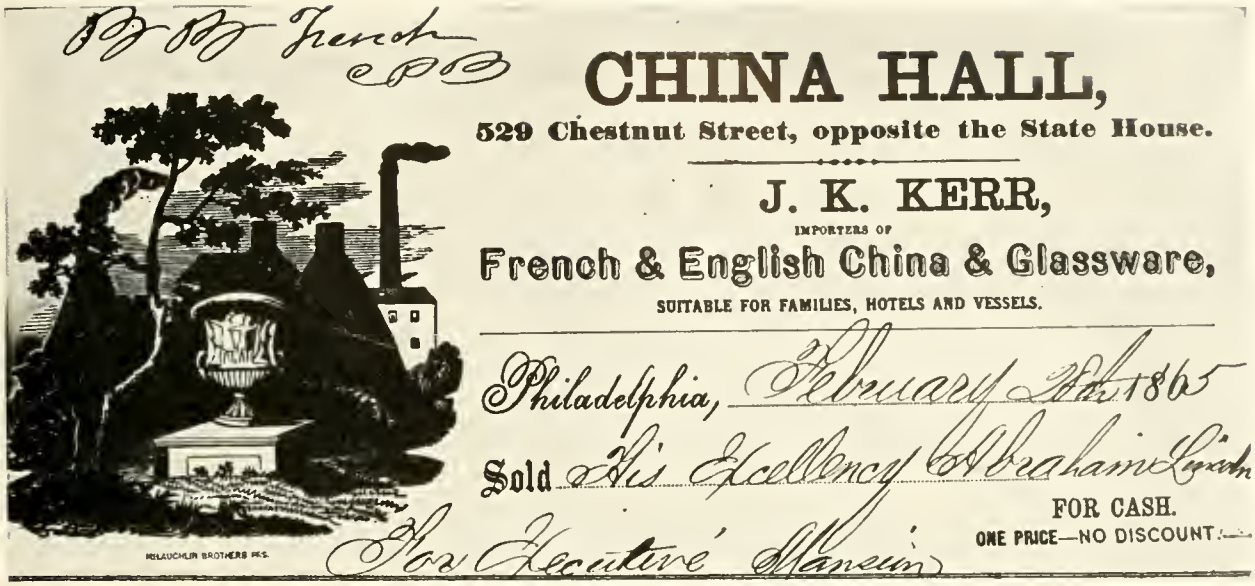

Figure 8.—Letterhead of J. K. Kerr, from whom the buff set was ordered. (Smithsonian photo 60001-B.)

Figure 9.—Gravy boat and soup bowl from the buff-bordered French porcelain ordered by Mrs. Lincoln for the White House in 1865. (USNM acc. 228204; Smithsonian photo 48115-Y.)

Figure 10.—Pieces from the buff-bordered service displayed in the China Room in the White House. (*Photo by Abbie Rowe, courtesy National Park Service.*)

Figure 11.—Soup bowl from the Royal Worcester service used at the summer White House at the Soldiers' Home during the administration of President Abraham Lincoln. (USNM acc. 228204; Smithsonian photo 48115-F.)

on August 29, 1865, at which time it was endorsed "Received from B B French C. P. Bgs the above amnt of Two thousand three hundred & thirty two dollars in full of this account." (The difference between this amount and that given above is accounted for by the fact that the original order included 4 dozen goblets and 28 dozen wineglasses of various sizes, costing a total of $632.50.) The second bill was paid on February 10, 1866.

The inventory made when Mrs. Lincoln turned over the White House to President Johnson lists under china and glassware "One full set China," which was certainly this buff and gold service, and "3 small remnants of china sets nearly all broken up," which must have included the remaining pieces of the royal-purple service.[13]

Evidently, the Johnsons decided to use the purple china, because we find that in less than a year they ordered replacement pieces for it. A bill from E. V. Haughwout, dated January 17, 1866 [14] lists—

To the following articles of rich China Ware with Arms & Crests of the U.S. to replace the pieces broken & lost of the Solferino sett viz

1 salad dish, 4 pickles, 36 custard cups, 24 egg cups, 18 dishes—4/10-, 6/11-, 6/13-, 1/15-, 1/18-inch	
6 comports 3/high, 2/low, & 1/shell	
2 dessert sugars, 2 round baskets	
2 butter dishes, 31 dinner plates	
57 dessert plates, 48 tea plates	
25 soup " , 26 preserve "	
36 breakfast coffees, 36 black coffees	
36 teas, 1 Cake plate, 4 pitchers	
1 Ice bowl	2061 25

Even with this second order, which almost equalled the original in size and cost, the purple set did not last; early in the administration of President Grant not enough of it was left to set the table in the State Dining Room satisfactorily. Those who handled the Lincoln set grew weary, it is said, of the constant breakage and became convinced that not careless handling but "bad luck in the china itself" was destroying both the dishes and the patience of those who were responsible for them.[15]

The story of the china associated with the Lincoln administration must also include a service used by the Lincolns at the summer White House which they maintained on the grounds of the Soldiers' Home in Washington, D.C. Recently, the Quartermaster Corps of the Army turned over to the White House for the china collection some pieces of Royal Worcester china used in the house at the time of President Lincoln's occupancy. It has a wide border of tiny gray and yellow flowers in a diaper design, with a multicolored floral wreath in the center of the plate. This use of English china and the informal design of the set is noteworthy, as almost every set of official china up to this time had been French, and French china continued to be used at the White House until almost the end of the 19th century.

It is appropriate in this discussion of the Lincoln china to mention the number of commemorative reproductions which were made for sale to the general public as souvenirs in the last quarter of the 19th century. The earliest of these reproduction pieces seem to be some which are marked on the back "Fabriqué par Haviland & Co./Pour J. W. Boteler & Bro./Washington." The firm of J. W. Boteler and Brother is first listed in the Washington City Directory in 1867 and it was in existence until 1881 when the name of the firm was changed to J. W. Boteler & Son. The dates of Boteler & Brother encompasses the period of the celebration of the Centennial of the United States in 1876. This celebration created intense interest in the Presidency and objects which symbolized the office, providing a ready market for copies of the Lincoln china. Indeed several different pieces of White House china have been brought to our attention with family legends that they were purchased at the "World's Fair." In each case it has been clear that the "Fair" meant the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. Two reproduction plates have been brought to the Smithsonian Institution for examination. On both of these the words "Administration Abraham Lincoln" were stamped on the back in red. It is well for collectors

Figure 12.—Drawing of the mark found, in red, on the two plates submitted to the Museum for identification.

[13] National Archives, records of Commissioner of Public Buildings and Grounds, inventory of the Lincoln Administration, 1865.

[14] Op. cit. (footnote 9), voucher 18.

[15] Theodore R. Davis, "Presidential Porcelain of a Century," *The Ladies' Home Journal* (May 1889), p. 4.

Figure 13.—Obverse of Lincoln plate bearing the mark of J. W. Boteler and Bro. (Smithsonian photo 44120.)

of White House china to remember that the original pieces of the Lincoln service did not bear any mark on the reverse.

The excellent quality of the pieces bearing the Boteler mark may explain a persistent legend that Edward Lycett was associated with the Lincoln service.[16] Mr. Lycett came to this country from England in 1861 and thereafter was identified with the development and expansion of the art of china painting in America until the turn of the century. Many sources credit Mr. Lycett with painting the second order of the Lincoln service on commission of John Vogt & Co. of New York City. As the records establish the fact that the second order for the china was made to E. V. Houghwout & Co., just as was the first, we can only speculate that perhaps Mr. Lycett painted the commemorative china which bears the mark of J. W. Boteler & Brother and of Haviland & Co. which is so beautifully hand painted to match the official White House china.

[16] Edwin Atlee Barber, loc. cit. (footnote 5).

Figure 14.—Mark of J. W. Boteler & Bro. used on reverse of Lincoln plate. (Smithsonian photo 44120-L.)

In the collections of the Smithsonian's Museum of History and Technology are the following pieces of the royal-purple set of Lincoln china:

Plate and 2-handled custard cup. Gift of Col. Theodore Barnes, (USNM accession 206542, cat. nos. 58566 and 58567).

Dinner coffee cup and saucer, gift of Mr. Lincoln Isham (USNM accession 219098, cat. no. 219098.9). This cup and saucer are the ones which were used by President Lincoln at dinner on the night of April 14, 1865, just before he attended the performance at Ford's Theater at which he was assassinated.

The following pieces are in the Smithsonian Institution on loan from the White House (accessions 221233 and 228204).

From the purple set:
- small oval platter
- meat platter
- 3 compotes
- oval fruit basket
- coffee cup and saucer
- water pitcher
- fish platter
- dinner plate
- shallow bowl
- soup bowl.

From the set with the buff band:
- soup bowl
- gravy boat.

U.S. Government Printing Office: 1967

For sale by Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402 Price 35 cents

Contributions from
The Museum of History and Technology
Paper 63

The Penitente Moradas of Abiquiú

Richard E. Ahlborn

Introduction
Penitente Organization
Origins of the Penitente Movement
The History of Abiquiú
The Architecture of the Moradas
Interior Space and Artifacts
Summary

Smithsonian Institution Press
Washington, D.C.
1968

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 1969 O - 347-895

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402 - Price 75 cents

FIGURE 26. CROSS [*cruz*] SIZE: 116.7 centimeters high, 73.6 wide. DATE: First quarter of 20th century: ORIGIN: Abiquiú; Onésimo Martínez LOCATION: South *morada*, center room. MANUFACTURE: Indigo blue designs (stencilled?).

Richard E. Ahlborn

THE PENITENTE MORADAS OF ABIQUIÚ

By the early 19th century, Spanish-speaking residents of villages in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado felt the need for a brotherhood that would preserve their traditional social and religious beliefs. Known as "brothers of light," or penitentes, *these Spanish-Americans centered their activities in a houselike building, or* morada, *especially equipped for Holy Week ceremonies.*

For the first time, two intact moradas *have been fully photographed and described through the cooperation of the* penitente *brothers of Abiquiú, New Mexico.*

THE AUTHOR: *Richard E. Ahlborn is associate curator in the Division of Cultural History in the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of History and Technology.*

Introduction

THIS STUDY DESCRIBES two earthern buildings and their special furnishings—humble but unique documents of Spanish-American culture. The two structures are located in Abiquiú, a rural, Spanish-speaking village in northern New Mexico. Known locally as *moradas,* they serve as meeting houses for members of a flagellant brotherhood, the *penitentes.*

The *penitente* brotherhood is characteristic of Spanish culture in New Mexico (herein called *Hispano* to indicate its derivation from Hispanic traditions in Mexico). Although penitential activities occurred in Spain's former colonies—Mexico, Argentina, and the Philippines—the *penitentes* in the mountainous region that extends north of Albuquerque into southern Colorado are remarkable for their persistence.

After a century and a half of clerical criticism [1] and

1. Beginning in 1820 with the report of ecclesiastic visitor Niño de Guevara, the Catholic Church has continued to frown upon *penitente* activities. A modern critical study by a churchman: FATHER ANGÉLICO CHAVEZ, "The Penitentes of New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* (April 1954), vol. 22, pp. 97–123.

extracultural pressures against the movement, physical evidence of *penitente* activity, although scattered and diminished, still survives. As intact, functioning artifacts, the *penitente moradas* at Abiquiú are valuable records of an autonomous, socio-religious brotherhood and of its place in the troubled history of Spanish-American culture in the Southwest.

This paper maintains that *penitentes* are not culturally deviant or aberrant but comprise a movement based firmly in Hispanic traditions as shown by their architecture and equipment found at Abiquiú and by previously established religious and social practices. Also, this paper presents in print for the first time a complete, integrated, and functioning group of *penitente* artifacts documented, in situ, by photographs.

My indebtedness in this study to local residents is immense: first, for inspiration, from Rosenaldo Salazar of Hernández and his son Regino, who introduced me to *penitente* members at Abiquiú and four times accompanied me to the *moradas*. The singular opportunity to measure and to photograph interiors and individual artifacts is due wholly to the understandably wary but proud, *penitentes* themselves. The task of identifying religious images in the *moradas* was expertly done by E. Boyd, Curator of the Spanish-Colonial Department in the Museum of New Mexico at Santa Fe. The final responsibility for accuracy and interpretation of data, of course, is mine alone.

Penitente Organization

Penitente brotherhoods usually are made up of Spanish-speaking Catholic laymen in rural communities. Although the activities and artifacts vary in specific details, the basic structure, ceremonies, and aims of *penitentes* as a cultural institution may be generalized. Full membership is open only to adult males. Female relatives may serve *penitente* chapters as auxiliaries who clean, cook, and join in prayer, as do children on occasion, but men hold all offices and make up the membership-at-large.

Penitente membership comprises two strata distinguishable by title and activity. In his study of *Hispano* institutional values, Monro Edmonson notes that *penitente* chapters are divided into these two groups: (1) common members or brothers in discipline, *hermanos disciplantes;* and (2) officers, called brothers of light, *hermanos de luz.*

Edmonson names each officer and lists his duties:

> The head of the chapter is the *hermano mayor.* He is assisted in administrative duties by the warden (*celador*) and the collector (*mandatario*), and in ceremonial duties by an assistant (*coadjutor*), reader (*secretario*), blood-letter (*sangredor*) and flutist (*pitero*). An official called the nurse (*enfermero*) attends the flagellants, and a master of novices (*maestro de novios*) supervises the training of new members.[2]

In an early and apparently biased account of the *penitentes,* Reverend Alexandar Darley,[3] a Presbyterian missionary in southern Colorado, provides additional terms for three officers: *picador* (the blood-letter), *regador* or *rezador* (a tenth officer, who led prayers) and *mayordomo de la muerte* (literally "steward of death"). As host for meetings between *penitente* chapters, the *mayordomo* may be a late 19th-century innovation that bears the political overtones of a local leader.[4]

Having less influence than individual officers are the *penitente* members-at-large, numbering between thirty and fifty in each chapter. Through the *Hispano* family system of extended bilateral kinship, however, much of the village population is represented in each local *penitente* group.

Edmonson's study in the Rimrock district demonstrates the deep sense of social responsibility felt by *penitentes* for members and their extended family circles. "Special assistants were appointed from time to time to visit the sick or perform other community services which the brotherhood may undertake." [5] At other times of need, especially in sickness and death, the general *penitente* membership renders invaluable service to the afflicted family. In addition, *penitente* welfare efforts include spiritual as well as physical comfort such as wakes, prayers and rosaries, and the singing of funereal chants (*alabados*). At Española in November of 1965, I witnessed *penitentes* contributing such help to respected nonmembers: grave digging, financial aid, and a rosary service with *alabados.*

2. Monro S. Edmonson, *Los Manitos: A Study of Institutional Values* (Publ. 25, Middle American Research Institute; New Orleans: Tulane University, 1950), p. 43.

3. Alexander M. Darley, *The Passionists of the Southwest* (Pueblo, *1893*).

4. E. Boyd, Curator of the Spanish-Colonial Department, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, states that Jesús Trujjillo in 1947 furnished information on other *penitente* officers, including one man who uses the *matraca* and one who acts as a sergeant at arms.

5. Edmonson, loc. cit.

These spiritual services, however, are peripheral to the principal religious activity of *penitentes*—the Lenten observance of the Passion and death of Jesus. During Holy Week, prayer meetings, rosaries, and *via crucis* processions with religious images are held at the *morada* and at a site representing Calvary (*calvario*), usually the local cemetery. On Good Friday, vigils are kept and the *morada* is darkened for a service known as *las tinieblas*. The ceremony of "the darkenings" consists of silent prayer broken by violent noise making. Metal sheets and chains, wooden blocks and rattles are manipulated to suggest natural disturbances at the moment of Jesus' death on the cross. This emphatic portrayal of His last hours is recalled also by acts of contrition and flagellation in *penitente* initiation rites, punishments, and Holy Week processions.

Penitentes use physical discipline and mortification as a dramatic means to intensify their imitation of Jesus' suffering.[6] Heavy timber crosses (*maderos*) and cactus whips (*disciplinas*) are used in processions that often include a figure of death in a cart (*la carreta de la muerte*). Disciplinary and initiatory mortification in the *morada* makes use of flint or glass blood-letting devices (*padernales*).[7]

Origins of the Penitente Movement

By 1833, bodily penance practiced in lay brotherhoods of *Hispano* Catholics attracted criticism from the Church in New Mexico and resulted in the pejorative name *penitentes*.[8] Historically, however, within the traditional framework of Hispanic Catholicism, the *penitentes* had precedents for their religious practices, including flagellation.

Penitente rites were derived from Catholic services already common in colonial New Mexico. Prayers and rosaries said before altars comprised an important part of *Hispano* religious observances, and processions of Catholics and *penitentes* alike were announced by bell, drum, and rifle in *Hispano* villages. In particular, *penitentes* used *via crucis* processions to dramatize the Passion, portrayed in every Catholic church by the fourteen Stations of the Cross. *Penitentes* also maintained Catholic Lenten practices by holding *tenebrae* services, the *tinieblas* rites mentioned above, and by flagellation.

These parallels between Catholic and *penitente* religious observances caused Edmonson to theorize that "the autonomous movement originated within the Church."[9] Variations, however, between the two religious traditions led Edmonson to discover "an important thread of religious independence and even apostasy in New Mexican history."[10] Edmonson's study of 1950 has established the persistence of *penitente* activity in *Hispano* culture.

Three and a half centuries earlier, in 1598, Spanish settlers made a courageous thrust into the inhospitable environment of New Mexico. Through the 17th and 18th centuries, Spanish settlement along the upper Rio Grande was a tenuous thread unraveled from a stronger fabric in Mexico. Aridity and extremes in temperatures marked New Mexico's climate. Arable land was scarce and could be extended back from streams only by careful upkeep of the irrigation ditches. Plateaus rose from 1500 to more than 2500 meters in altitude. Building timbers were hard to obtain without roads or navigable rivers.

Finally, distance itself was a challenge, sometimes insurmountable for the supply caravans from Mexico. Outfitted over a thousand miles to the south of Santa Fe, the Mexican caravans brought *presidio* and mission supplies, but few goods for the common settler. By the end of the 18th century, Spanish authorities thought of the northern colonies (*provincias internas*) primarily as missionary fields and military buffer zones.[11]

Cultural traditions and an insecure environment caused Spanish colonists to turn to religion for comfort. Again, however, a supply problem arose. Individual *ranchos* were too scattered for clerical visits, and even settlements that were grouped for greater security, *poblaciones* or *plazas*, became *visitas* on little

6. George Wharton James, *New Mexico: Land of the Delight Makers* (Boston, 1920), lists concisely the Biblical and historical references to religious mortification practiced by New Mexican *penitentes*.

7. Darley (op. cit., pp. 8 ff.) gives an exhaustive list of methods of mortification said to be used by *penitentes*.

8. Angélico Chavez, *Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, 1678–1900* (Washington, 1957): "Books of Patentes," 1833: books xi, xii, xix, lxxiii, and lxxxii. (Original documents from archives noted hereinafter as AASF.)

9. Edmonson, p. 33.

10. Ibid., p. 18.

11. H. E. Bolton, "The Spanish Borderlands and the Mission as a Frontier Institution," *American Historical Review* (Santa Fe, 1917), vol. 23, pp. 42–61, indicates that this policy was developed after 1765 by Charles III of Spain in an attempt to reorganize the administration of his vast colonial empire.

more than an annual basis, sharing two dozen Franciscan clergy with missions assigned to Indian *pueblos* and Spanish villages. Before 1800, a shortage of friars prompted the Bishop in Durango to send secular clergy into the Franciscan enclave of New Mexico. In 1821 the Mexican Revolution formalized secularization with a new constitution. In brief, the traditional religious patterns of the *Hispanos* were threatened. They needed reinforcement if they were to survive.

By 1850, other conditions in New Mexico endangered the status quo of the Spanish-speaking residents. With the growing dominance of Anglo-Americans in the commercial, military, political, and social matters of Santa Fe, *Hispanos* recognized the threat of Anglo culture to their own traditional way of life. This cultural challenge turned many *Hispanos* back in upon themselves for physical and social security and for spiritual comfort. By the second quarter of the 19th century, *penitentes* were common in *Hispano* villages such as Abiquiú.[12] The immediate origins of penitentism were clearly present in early 19th-century New Mexico.

Despite this evidence, historians of the Spanish Southwest have suggested geographically and culturally remote sources for the *penitentes*. Dorothy Woodward has pointed out similarities between New Mexican *penitentes* and Spanish brotherhoods (*cofradías*) of laymen.[13] *Cofradías* were not full church orders like the Franciscan Third Order, but they did conduct Lenten processions with flagellation.

Somewhat nearer in miles but culturally more distant from *Hispano penitente* experience was mortification practiced by Indians in New Spain. In the 16th century, Spanish chroniclers reported incidents ranging from sanguinary ceremonies of central Mexican tribes to whippings witnessed in the northern provinces of Sonora and New Mexico. While of peripheral interest to this study, these activities of American Indians had no direct bearing on *Hispano* cultural needs in early 19th-century New Mexico.

It is more significant that *Hispanos* already knew a lay religious institution that very easily could have served as a model for the *penitente* brotherhood—the Third Order of St. Francis. Established in 13th-century Italy and carried to Spain by the Gray Friars, the Order is recorded in contemporary histories of New Mexico before 1700. Materials in the archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe also document the presence of the Franciscan Third Order in New Mexico and suggest to me its influence on *penitente* activity.[14]

In March 1776, Fray Domínguez, an ecclesiastic visitor, recorded Lenten "exercises" of the Third Order under the supervision of the resident priest at Santa Cruz and, two weeks later, in April, Domínguez visited Abiquiú, where he commended the Franciscan friar, Fray Sebastian Angel Fernández, for "feasts of Our Lady, rosary with the father in church. Fridays of Lent, *Via Crucis* with the father, and later, after dark, discipline attended by those who came voluntarily."[15] Domínguez, however, described the priest as "not at all obedient to rule"[16] when Father Fernández, acting in an independent manner, proceeded to build missions at Picuris and Sandia without authorization. But in 1777, he again praised Fray Fernández for special *Via Crucis* devotions and "scourging by the resident missionary and some of the faithful."[17] Domínguez thus documented flagellant practices and *tinieblas* services at Abiquiú and his approval, as an official Church representative, of these activities.

Father Chavez, O.F.M., protests the theory of *penitente* origins in the Third Order of St. Francis and counters with the idea that "penitentism" was imported directly from Mexico in the early 1800s.[18] I note, however, that the bishops seated in Santa Fe after 1848 recognized the strength of this lay socio-religious movement and tried to deal with it in terms of the Order. At a synod in 1888, Archbishop Salpointe pleaded for *penitentes* "to return" to the Third Order. Some degree of direct influence of the Third Order on "penitentism" seems fairly certain.

The History of Abiquiú

About three generations before the first *morada* was built at Abiquiú, the conditions of settlement mentioned earlier and subsequent historical events resulted in an environment conducive to the development of

12. AASF, Patentes, book lxxiii, box 6.

13. "The Penitentes of the Southwest" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Yale University, 1935).

14. Chavez, *Archives*, p. 3 (ftn.).

15. Fray Francisco Atanasio Domínguez, *The Missions of New Mexico, 1776*, transl. and annot. Eleanor B. Adams and Fray Angelico Chavez (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1956), p. 124.

16. Domínguez, ms., from Biblioteca Nacional de Méjico, leg. 10, no. 46, p. 300.

17. Ibid., no. 43, p. 321.

18. Chavez, "Penitentes," p. 100.

FIGURE 1. Mid-19th-century New Mexico, showing pertinent geographical features, Indian pueblos (indicated by solid triangles), and Spanish villages cited in text.

penitente activity. Shortly after 1740, civil authorities in Santa Fe attempted to settle colonists along the Chama River in order to create a buffer zone between marauding Indians to the northwest and Spanish and Pueblo villages on the Rio Grande (Figure 1). This constant threat of annihilation produced self-reliant and independent-minded settlers.

Unorthodoxy appeared early in the religious history of Abiquiú. By 1744, settlers had installed Santa Rosa de Lima as their patroness in a little riverside plaza near modern Abiquiú. After a decade, several colonists from Santa Rosa were moved to the hilltop plaza of Abiquiú, where the mission of Santo Tomás Apostol had been established. In his 1776 visit to Abiquiú, Domínguez noted, however, a continuing allegiance to the earlier patroness: ". . . settlers use the name of Santa Rosa, as the lost mission was called in the old days. Therefore, they celebrate the feast of this female saint [August 30th] and not of that masculine saint [St. Thomas the Apostle, December 21]."[19] Loyalty to Saint Rose survived this official protest, and village festivals have persisted in honoring Santa Rosa to this day. It is, therefore, not surprising to find her image in the earlier east *morada* of Abiquiú.

A disturbing influence in the religious life of Abiquiú were semi-Christianized servants (*genízaros*), who had been ransomed from the Indians by Spaniards.[20] Often used to establish frontier settlements, *genízaros* came to be a threat to the cultural stability of Abiquiú. For example, in 1762, two *genízaros* accused of witchcraft were taken to Santa Cruz for judicial action. After the trial, Governor Cachupín sent a detachment from Santa Fe to Abiquiú to destroy an inscribed stone said to be a relic of black magic.[21] Similar incidents with *genízaros* during the next generation prolonged the unstable religious pattern at Abiquiú. In 1766, an Indian girl accused a *genízaro* couple of killing the resident priest, Fray Felix Ordoñez y Machado, by witchcraft.[22] And again in 1782 and 1786, charges of apostasy were entered against Abiquiú *genízaros*.[23]

Another disturbing element in the religious history of Abiquiú was the disinterest of her settlers in the

19. DOMÍNGUEZ, *Missions*, pp. 121 (ftn. 1), 200.

20. AASF, Patentes, 1700, forbids friars to buy *genízaros* even under the excuse of Christianizing them since the result would likely be morally dangerous.

21. H. H. BANCROFT, *History of Arizona and New Mexico* (San Francisco, 1889), p. 258.

22. DOMÍNGUEZ, *Missions*, p. 336.

23. AASF, Loose Documents, Mission, 1782, no. 7.

building and furnishing of Santo Tomás Mission. Although the structure was completed in the first generation of settlement at Abiquiú, 1755 to 1776, Domínguez could report only two contributions from colonists, both loans: "In this room [sacristy] there is an ordinary table with a drawer and key . . . a loan from a settler called Juan Pablo Martin . . . . the chalice is in three pieces, and one of them, for it is a loan by the settlers, is used for a little shrine they have." [24] All mission equipment was supplied by royal funds (*sínodos*) except some religious articles provided by the resident missionary, Fray Fernández, who finished the structure raised half way by his predecessor, Fray Juan José Toledo. Both Franciscans found settlers busy with everyday problems of survival and resentful when called on to labor for the mission. The settlers not only failed to supply any objects, but when they were required to work at the mission, all tools and equipment had to be supplied to them.[25]

Despite these detrimental influences, the mission at Abiquiú continued to grow. Between 1760 and 1793, the population increased from 733 to 1,363, making Abiquiú the third largest settlement in colonial New Mexico north of Paso del Norte [Ciudad Juarez].[26] (Only Santa Cruz with 1,650 and Santa Fe with 2,419 persons were larger.) In 1795, the pueblo had maintained its size at 1,558, with Indians representing less than 10 percent of the population.[27]

The increase in size brought the mission at Abiquiú more important and longer-term resident missionaries: Fathers José de la Prada, from 1789 to 1806, and Teodoro Alcina de la Borda, from 1806 to 1823. Both men were elected directors (*custoses*) of the Franciscan mission field in New Mexico, "The Custody of the Conversion of St. Paul." *Custoses* Prada and Borda backed the Franciscans, who were fighting for a missionary field that they had long considered their own. Official directives (*patentes*) issued by *Custos* Prada at Abiquiú warned all settlers against "new ideas of liberty" and asked each friar for his personal concept of governmental rights.[28] In 1802, Fray Prada also complained to the new *Custos*, Father Sanchez Vergara, about missions that had been neglected under the secular clergy.[29] In this period, Abiquiú's mission was a center of clerical reaction to the revolutionary political ideas and clerical secularization that had resulted from Mexico's recent independence from Spain.

In the year 1820, the strained relations between religious authorities and the laity at Abiquiú clearly reflected the unstable conditions in New Mexico. Eventually, charges of manipulating mission funds and neglect of clerical duties were brought against Father Alcina de la Borda by the citizens of Abiquiú.[30] At the same time, Governor Melgares informed the *Alcalde Mayor,* Santiago Salazar, that these funds (*sínodos*) had been reduced and that an oath of loyalty to the Spanish crown would be required.[31] This situation produced a strong reaction in Abiquiú's next generation, which sought to preserve its traditional cultural patterns in the *penitente* brotherhoods.

The great-grandsons of Abiquiú's first settlers witnessed a significant change in organization of their mission—its secularization in 1826. For three years, Father Borda had shared his mission duties with Franciscans from San Juan and Santa Clara *pueblos,* giving way in 1823 to the last member of the Order to serve Santo Tomás, Fray Sanchez Vergara. Santo Tomás Mission received its first secular priest in 1823, Cura Leyva y Rosas, who returned to Abiquiú in 1832. Officially the mission at Abiquiú was secularized in 1826, along with those at Belén and Taos.[32]

The first secular priest assigned to Santo Tomás reflected the now traditional and self-sufficient character of *Hispano* culture at Abiquiú.[33] He was the independent-minded Don Antonio José Martínez. Born in Abiquiú, Don Antonio later became an ambitious spiritual and political leader in Taos, where he fought to preserve traditional *Hispano* culture from Anglo-American influences.

The mission served by Father Martínez in Taos bore resemblance to that at Abiquiú. Both missions rested on much earlier Indian settlements, but the Taos pueblo was still active. Furthermore, Taos and Abiquiú were buffer settlements on the frontier, where Indian raids as well as trade occurred. In 1827 a census by P. B. Pino listed nearly 3,600 persons at

24. Domínguez, *Missions*, p. 122.
25. Ibid., p. 123.
26. Bancroft, p. 279.
27. AASF, Loose Documents, Mission, 1795, no. 13.
28. Ibid., 1796, nos. 6, 7.
29. Ibid., 1802, no. 18.
30. Ibid., 1820, nos. 15, 21, 38; also R. E. Twitchell, *The Spanish Archives of New Mexico* (Cedar Rapids, 1914), vol. 2, pp. 630, 631.
31. AASF, Loose Documents, Mission, 1820, nos. 12, 21.
32. Ibid., 1826, no. 7.
33. Don Antonio was less than eager to accept his first post; he had to be ordered to report to duty (AASF, Accounts, book lxvi [box 6], April 27, 1826).

Taos and a similar count at Abiquiú; only Santa Fe with 5,700 and Santa Cruz with 6,500 were larger villages.

At this time, an independent element appeared in the religious activities of the Santa Cruz region. In 1831, Vicar Rascon gave permission to sixty members of the Third Order of St. Francis at Santa Cruz to hold Lenten exercises in Taos, provided that no "abuses" arose to be corrected on his next visit.[34] Apparently this warning proved inadequate, for in 1833 Archbishop Zubiría concluded his visitation at Santa Cruz by ordering that "pastors of this villa . . . must never in the future permit such reunions of *Penitentes* under any pretext whatsoever." [35] We have noted, however, that two generations earlier Fray Domínguez had commended similar observances at Santa Cruz and Abiquiú, and it was not until the visitation of Fray Niño de Guevara, 1817–1820, that Church officials found it necessary to condemn penitential activity in New Mexico.[36]

In little more than two generations, from 1776 to 1833, the Franciscan missions were disrupted by secularization and excessive acts of penance. In the second half of the 19th century, the new, non-Spanish Archbishops, Lamy and Salpointe, saw a relation between the Franciscan Third Order and the brotherhood of *penitentes*. When J. B. Lamy began signing rule books (*arreglos*) for the *penitente* chapters of New Mexico,[37] he hoped to reintegrate them into accepted Church practice as members of the Third Order. And at the end of the century, J. B. Salpointe expressed his belief that the *penitente* brotherhood had been an outgrowth of the Franciscan tertiaries.[38]

Abiquiú shared in events that marked the religious history of New Mexico in the last three quarters of the 19th century. We have noted the secularization of Santo Tomás Mission in 1826; by 1856 the village had its *penitente* rule book duly signed by Archbishop Lamy. Entitled *Arreglo de la Santa Hermandad de la Sangre de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo*, a copy was signed by Abiquiú's priest, Don Pedro Bernal, on April 6, 1867.[39] While officialdom worked out new religious and political relations, villagers struggled to preserve a more familiar tradition.

Occupation of New Mexico in 1846 by United States troops tended to solidify traditional *Hispano* life in Abiquiú. In that year, Navajo harassments caused an encampment of 180 men under Major Gilpin to be stationed at Abiquiú.[40] Eventually, the Indian raids slackened, and a trading post for the Utes was set up at Abiquiú in 1853.[41] Neither the U.S. Army nor Indian trading posts, however, became integrated into Abiquiú's *Hispano* way of life, and these extracultural influences soon moved on, leaving only a few commercial artifacts.

With a new generation of inhabitants occupying Abiquiú between 1864 and 1886, the village on the Rio Chama lost its primary function as a buffer settlement against nomadic Indians and settled down into a well-established cultural pattern, which in part was preserved by the *penitentes*. Kit Carson had rounded up the Navajos at Bosque Redondo, and two decades later, by 1883, the Utes had been moved north. In preparation, the Indian trading post at Abiquiú was closed in 1872 and moved to the new seat of Rio Arriba County, Tierra Amarilla,[42] 65 kilometers northward. Within two generations, Abiquiú's population had fallen to fewer than 800 from a high of nearly 3,600 in 1827.[43] As a result, many *Hispanos* at Abiquiú withdrew into the *penitente* organization, which promised to preserve and even intensify their traditional ways of life and beliefs. These attitudes were materialized in the building of the *penitente moradas*.

The Architecture of the Moradas

In a modern map (Figure 2), circles enclose the Mission of Abiquiú and its two *penitente moradas*. The *moradas* lie 300 meters east and 400 meters south of the main plaza onto which Santo Tomás Mission faces from the north. Between the *moradas* rests the local burial ground (*campo santo*), a cemetery that serves *penitentes* as "Calvary" (*calvario*) in their Lenten reenactment of the Passion.

34. AASF, Patentes, 1831, book lxx, box 4, p. 25.
35. Ibid., book lxxiii, box 7.
36. AASF, Accounts, book lxii, box 5.
37. AASF, Loose Documents, Diocesan, 1853, no. 17, for Santuario and Cochití; other rule books document *penitente* chapters at Chimayo, El Rito, and Taos.
38. Jean B. Salpointe, *Soldiers of the Cross* (Banning, Calif., 1898).
39. AASF, Loose Documents, Diocesan, 1856, no. 12.
40. Twitchell, pp. 533–534.
41. Bancroft, p. 665.
42. Twitchell, p. 447.
43. Ibid., p. 449, from P. B. Pino, *Noticias históricas* (Méjico, 1848); and *Ninth U.S. Census* (1870). The later figure may represent only the town proper: earlier statistics generally included outlying settlements.

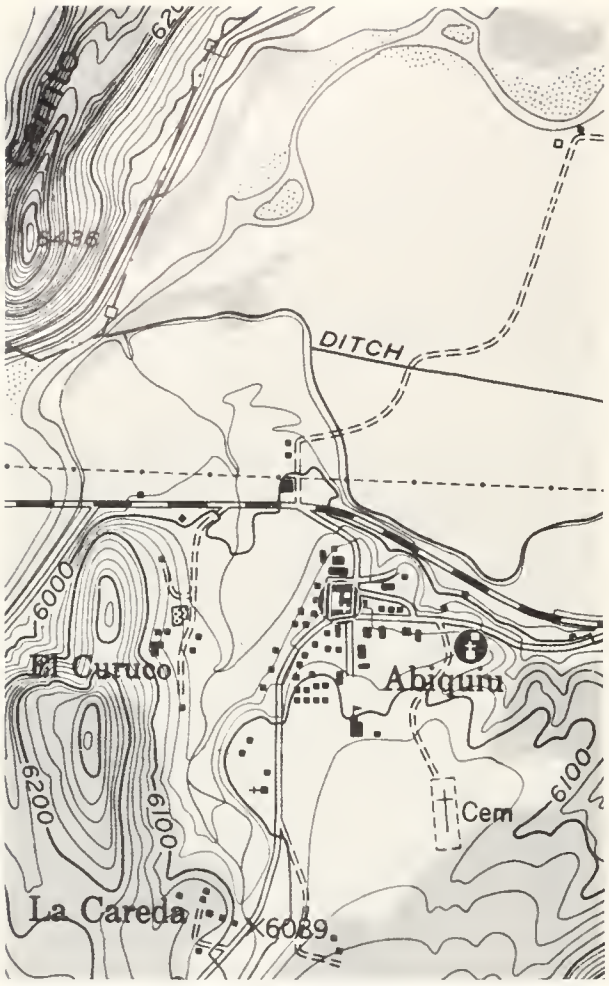

FIGURE 2. The Abiquiú area, showing the Chama River, U.S. Highway 84, and sighting of buildings (the mission of Santo Tomás and the two *moradas* are circled).

Penitente moradas share a common system of *adobe* construction with the religious and domestic structures of New Mexico. While the Indians set walls of puddled earth directly on the ground, the Spaniards, following Moorish precedent, laid *abobe* bricks on stone foundations. Standard house-size *adobes* average 15 by 30 by 50 centimeters. *Adobe* bricks are made by packing a mixture of mud, sand, and straw into a wood frame from which the block then is knocked out onto the ground to dry in the sun. Stones set in *adobe* mortar provide a foundation. The sun-dried bricks, which are also laid in *adobe* mortar, form exterior, load-bearing walls and interior partitions.

Spanish *adobe* construction also employs wood. Openings are framed and closed with a lintel that projects well into the wall. These recessed lintel faces often are left exposed after the plastering of adjoining surfaces. Roofs are transverse beams (*vigas*), which in turn hold small cross branches (*savinos*) or planks (*tablas*). A final layer of brush and *adobe* plaster closes the surface cracks. Plank drains (*canales*), rectangular in section, lead water from this soft roof surface (Figure 3).

Domestic *adobe* structures differ from ecclesiastic buildings in scale and in spatial arrangement. Colonial New Mexican churches are relatively large, unicellular spaces. Their simple nave volume often is made cruciform by a transept whose higher roof allows for a clearstory. A choir loft over the entry and a narrowed, elevated sanctuary further articulate the space at each end of the nave. In contrast, *Hispano* houses consist of several low rooms set in a line or grouped around a court (*placita*) in which a gate and porch (*portal*) are placed. Rooms vary in width according to the length of the transverse beams, which usually are from four to six meters long.[44]

The everyday living spaces inside Spanish-New Mexican houses tend to combine domestic activities and to appear similar in space and decor. Inside a *Hispano* church, however, areas of special useage are marked off clearly within the volume. Celebration of the mass requires a special spatial treatment to indicate the sanctuary. This area is emphasized by an arched entry, lateral pilasters, raised floor, and characteristically convergent side walls. These slanting walls provide better vision for the congregation and easier movement for the celebrants. The convergent wall of sanctuaries is often visible from the exterior. It is noteworthy that both the contracted sanctuary of local churches and the linear arrangement of domestic interiors appear in the *penitente moradas* of Abiquiú.

In the plans of the Abiquiú *moradas* (Figure 4), the identical arrangement of the three rooms reveals an origin in the typical *Hispano* house form. George Kubler has observed that the design of *moradas* "is closer to the domestic architecture of New Mexico than to the churches."[45] Bainbridge Bunting confirms the houselike form of *moradas* but notes their lack of uni-

44. The "Hall of Everyday Life in the American Past" in the Museum of History and Technology (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.) displays an interior typical of a Spanish-New Mexican *adobe* house of about 1800.

45. GEORGE KUBLER, *The Religious Architecture of New Mexico* (Colorado Springs, 1940), p. viii.

FIGURE 3. North roofline of east *morada*, showing exposed ends of ceiling beams (*vigas*), chimney of oratory stove, and construction of water drain (*canal*).

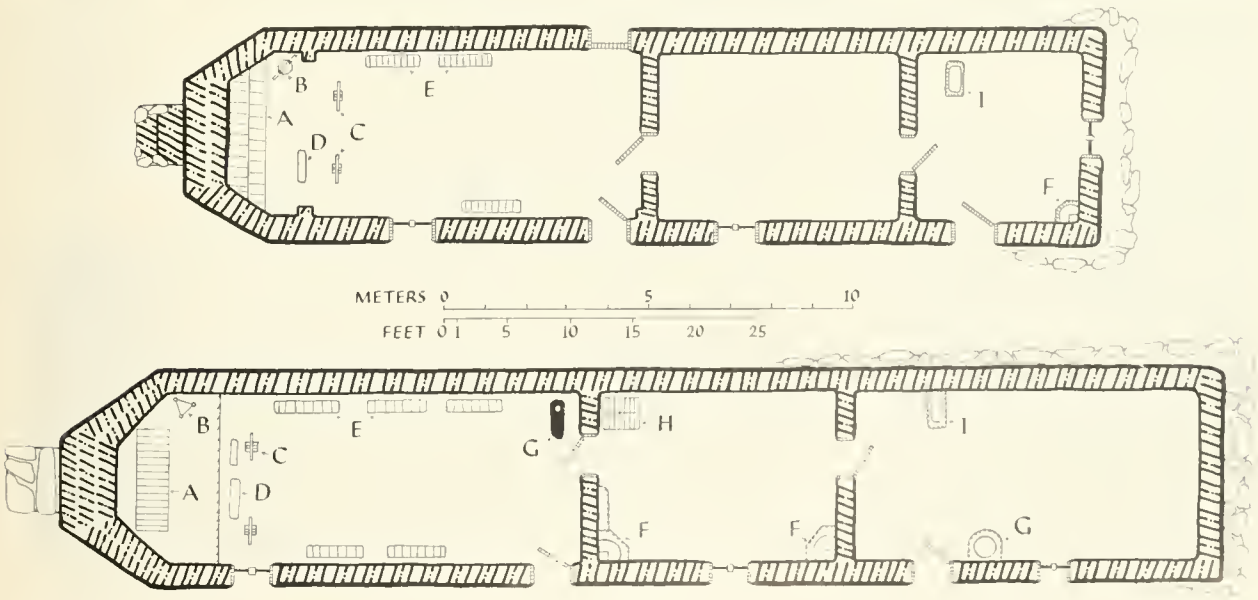

FIGURE 4. Plans of south *morada* (top) and east *morada* (bottom): A=altar; B=standard; C=candelabra. D=sandbox E=benches; F=fireplace; G=stove; H=chest. I=tub.

FIGURE 5. SOUTH *Morada*. SIZE: 24.02 meters long, 5.41 wide, 3.51 high. DATE: About 1900. LOCATION: 400 meters south of Santo Tomás Church in main plaza; seen from southeast corner. MANUFACTURE: *Adobe* bricks on stone foundation; wood door and window frames.

FIGURE 6. EAST *Morada*. SIZE: 28.82 meters long, 4.88 wide, 3.58 high. DATE: 19th century. LOCATION: 300 meters east-southeast of Santo Tomás Church in main plaza; seen from northeast corner. MANUFACTURE: Adobe bricks set on stone foundation; wood drains (*canales*) and beam (*viga*) ends at top of wall.

FIGURE 7. West end of south *morada,* showing construction of bell tower and contracted sanctuary walls.

FIGURE 8. Northwest view of east *morada,* showing limestone slab bell tower on contracted west end.

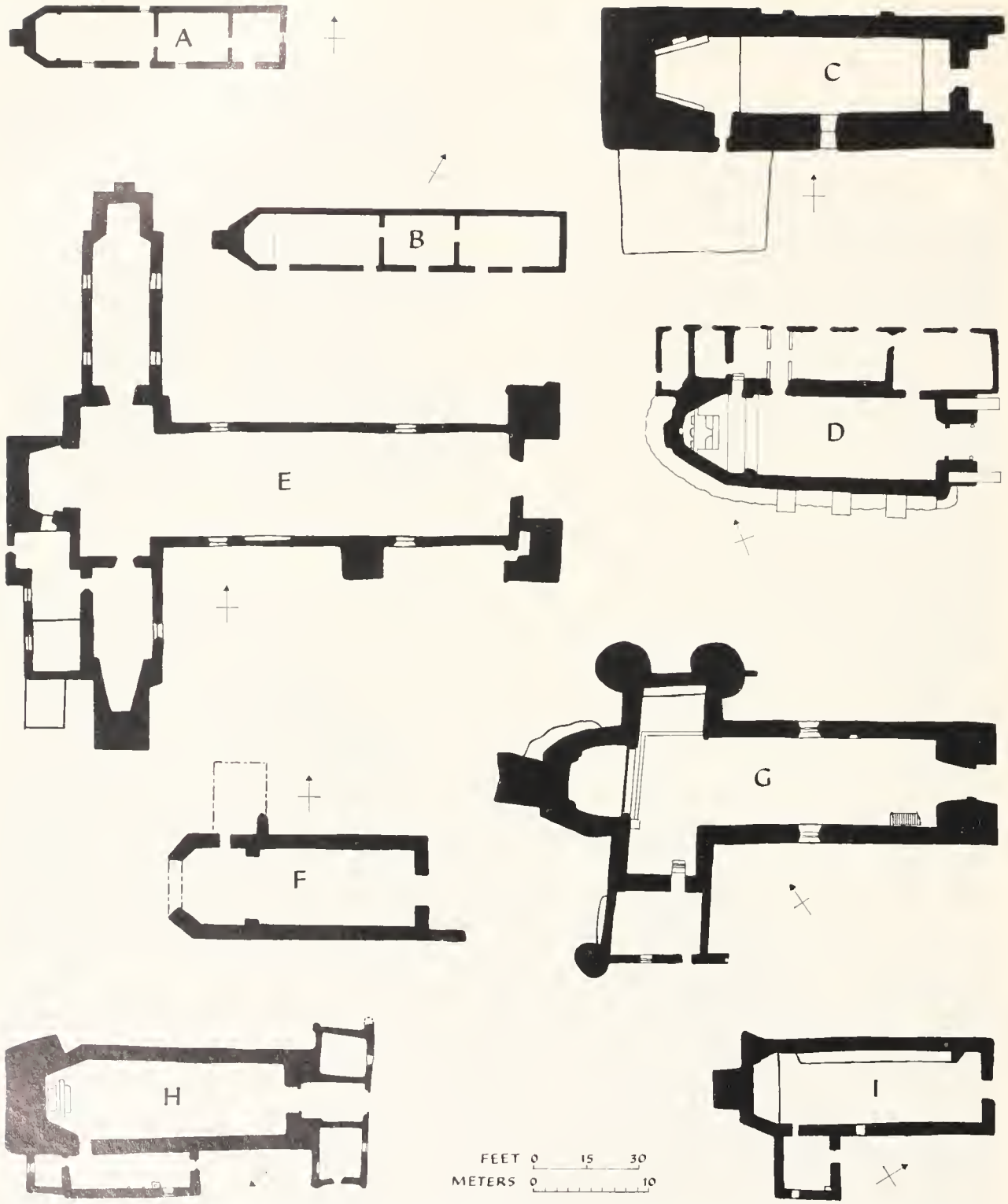

FIGURE 9. Plans of two Abiquiú *moradas* compared to New Mexican churches with contracted sanctuaries: A, south *morada*, B, east *morada;* C, Zía Mission; D, San Miguel in Santa Fe; E, Santa Cruz; F, Santa Rosa; G, Ranchos de Taos; H, the *santuario* at Chimayo; I, Córdova. (From Kubler, *Religious Architecture* [see ftn. 45]: C=his figure 8; D=28, E=9, F=34, G=13, H=22, I=35.)

formity.[46] In comparison to *moradas* of the L-plan,[47] and even of the pre-1856 T-plan structure at Arroyo Hondo,[48] the two *penitente* buildings at Abiquiú preserve a simple I shape with one significant variation—a contracted chancel.

The basic form of the Abiquiú *moradas* (Figures 5 and 6) is a rectangular box that closely resembles nearby houses. Even the long, windowless north facade of both Abiquiú *moradas* recalls the unbroken walls of earlier *Hispano* houses in hostile frontier regions. The Abiquiú *moradas*, however, possess one exception to the domestic form—a narrowed, accented end. On each *morada* the west end is blunted and buttressed by a salient bell tower of stones laid in *adobe* mortar and strengthened by horizontal boards (Figures 7 and 8). This innovation in the form of the Abiquiú *moradas* appears to be ecclesiastic in origin.

Plans of churches built close to Abiquiú in time, distance, and orientation could have served as sources for the design of the *moradas*' west ends (Figure 9). Only five kilometers east of Abiquiú stood the chapel dedicated to Santa Rosa de Lima. As shown in Figure 9F, the sanctuary in its west end had a raised floor and flanking entry pilasters, features found in the east *morada*'s west end. This chapel was dedicated about 1744 and was still active as a *visita* from Abiquiú in 1830.[49] Through this period and to the present, the popularity of Saint Rose of Lima has persisted at Abiquiú. Her nearby chapel would have been a likely and logical choice for the design of the *morada*'s sanctuary end.

A second possible source for the contracted ends of the Abiquiú *moradas* would be the south transept chapel of the Third Order of St. Francis at Santa Cruz (Figure 9E). It was completed shortly before 1798[50] and served Franciscan tertiaries into the 1830s. Plans compared in Figure 9 indicate that the dimensions of this left transept chapel at Santa Cruz measure only five percent larger than the chapel room of the east *morada* at Abiquiú, and the plans also reveal contracted chancel walls at both locations.

The concept of a constricted sanctuary as seen in Abiquiú *moradas* originated in earlier Spanish and Mexican churches. In 1479, architect Juan Guas used a trapezoidal apse plan in San Juan de los Reyes at Toledo and, by 1512, the design found its way into America's first cathedral at Santo Domingo. Within the first century of Spanish colonization, contracted sanctuary walls appeared on the American mainland in Arciniega's revised plan for Mexico City's Cathedral (post-1584)[51] and, again, in New Mexico, where it first appeared at the stone mission of Zía, built about 1614 (Figure 9C). Once established in the Franciscan province, the concept of converging sanctuary walls survived the 1680 Indian revolt and returned with the reconquest of New Mexico in 1693. Spaniards raised and rebuilt missions from the capital at Santa Fe (San Miguel, rebuilt 1710; Figure 9D) north to Taos (San Geronimo, 1706). Throughout the 18th century, in a three-to-one ratio, the churches of New Mexico used the contracted, as opposed to the box, sanctuary.

In the early 19th century, churches at Ranchos de Taos (1805–1815[52]; Figure 9G), Chimayo (about 1810; Figure 9H), and Córdova (after 1830; Figure 9I) continued to employ the trapezoidal sanctuary form. By midcentury, *penitente* brotherhoods are known to have been active in these villages, and the local ecclesiastic structures could have acted as an influence in the design of the *penitente moradas* at Abiquiú.

In summary, the *moradas* at Abiquiú are traditional regional buildings in material and in basic form. The pointed west end of each building, however, is an ecclesiastic innovation in an otherwise typical domestic design. These *moradas* provide a significant design variant in the history of Spanish-American architecture in New Mexico.

Interior Space and Artifacts

The plans of the two *penitente moradas* of Abiquiú (Figure 4) reveal an identical arrangement of interior

46. Bainbridge Bunting, *Taos Adobes* (Santa Fe, 1964), p. 54.

47. L-plan *moradas* are pictured by Woodward [see ftn. 13] in a 1925 photograph at San Mateo, a different *morada* from that illustrated in Charles F. Lummis, *Land of Poco Tiempo* (New York, 1897), as well as in another Woodward photograph [see ftn. 13] taken on the road to Chimayo. L. B. Prince, *Spanish Mission Churches of New Mexico* (Cedar Rapids, 1915), shows an L-plan *morada* near Las Vegas Was the L-plan house an unconscious recall of the more secure structure that completely enclosed a *placita*?

48. Bunting, p. 56. After 1960 the Arroyo Hondo *morada* became the private residence of Larry Franks.

49. AASF, Loose Documents, Mission, 1829 (May 27).

50. Kubler, *Religious Architecture*, p. 103.

51. George Kubler and Martin Soria, *The Art and Architecture of Spain and Portugal and Their American Dominions, 1500 to 1800* (Baltimore, 1959), pp. 3, 64, 74

52. E. Boyd, interview, April 1966. Building date of about 1780 usually is given for the present church. Boyd, however, states that documents in AASF support the tree-ring dates given in Kubler *Religious Architecture*, p. 121, as 18[illegible]

space. There are three rooms in each *morada*: (1) the longest is on the west end and, with its constricted sanctuary space, acts as an oratory; (2) the center room serves as a sacristy; and (3) the east room is for storage. The only major difference between the two *moradas* is the length of the storage room, which is nearly twice as long in the east *morada*. The remarkable similarities in design suggest that one served as the model for the other; local oral tradition holds that the east *morada* is older.[53]

Internal evidence indicates that the east *morada* is indeed the older one. As shown in Figure 2, the south *morada* is located farther from the Abiquiú *plaza,* suggesting it was built at a later date—perhaps nearer 1900, when public and official criticism had prompted greater privacy for Holy Week processions, which were considered spectacles by tourists. In addition, the lesser width of the south *morada* rooms, the square-milled beams in the oratory, and the fireplace in the east end storage room indicate that it was built after the east *morada*. In contrast, the two corner fireplaces of the east *morada* are set in the center room, while another heating arrangement—an oil drum set on a low *adobe* dais—appears to have been added at a later date.

The east *morada* was the obvious model for the builders of the later one on the south edge of Abiquiú. Local *penitentes* admit that there was a division in the original chapter just prior to 1900 [54] but deny that the separation was made because of political differences, as suggested by one author.[55] The older members say that the first *morada* merely had become too large for convenient use of the building.

The three rooms in each *morada* are distinguished by bare, whitewashed walls of *adobe* plaster, hard-packed dirt floors, two exterior doors, and three windows. A locked door is located off the oratory in the north face of the south *morada*. Figures 10 and 11 show the sanctuaries in the south and east *morada;* and Figure 12, the back of the east *morada* oratory. Its open door leads into the center room, where the members would not remove the boards on the windows for me to take photographs. The east end room in each *morada* serves for storage of processional and ceremonial equipment.

Storage Room in Both Moradas.—In the south *morada* (Figure 13), there are cactus scourges (*disciplinas*), corrugated metal sheeting used for roofing, and three rattles (*matracas;* Figure 14), also used for noise-making in *tinieblas* services. Situated here also are black Lenten candelabrum, a ladder, a cross with silvered Passion emblems, and massive penitential crosses (*maderos;* Figure 15). The Lenten ladder and cross are shown next to the exterior entry (Figure 16). A corner fireplace is flanked by locally made tin candle sconces (Figure 17). Two 19th-century kerosene lamps appear on the fireplace mantle, and a tin-shaded lantern with its silver-plated reservoir hangs from the ceiling (Figure 15).

In each *morada* storage area, there is a tub built on the floor that serves to wash off blood after penance. Figure 13 shows the tub in the south *morada*. In the older, east *morada*, the tub (Figure 18) is a wood- and tin-lined trough pushed against the north wall and plastered with *adobe*.

The storage room in the east *morada* also contains commercially made lamps, such as the plated reservoir with stamped Neo-rococo motifs (Figure 19). Nearby is a processional cross with two metal faces and a small, cast corpus (Figure 20). While kerosene lanterns are evidence of east-west rail commerce after 1880, the cross probably indicates a southern contact, possibly through Parral or Chihuahua, Mexico. Locally made, however, are the woven rag rugs (*jergas*) hung over a pole (*varal*)[56] that drops from the ceiling. Also in the east *morada* storage are two percussion rifles (Figure 21). Craddock Goins, Department of Armed Forces History, the Smithsonian Institution, identifies both as common Indian trade objects from midcentury Europe. These rifles probably were imports for sale to the Utes at the Abiquiú trading post between 1853 and 1874. At the rear of the room (Figure 22) rests a saw-horse table holding an assortment of stocks for these "trade guns," of wooden rattles (*matracas*), and of heavy crosses (*maderos*). On the ground stands a large bell, which, in a photograph (Museum of New Mexico, Photo No. 8550) taken by William Lippincott about 1945, appears on the tower of the *morada*. The

53. Interviews with Abiquiú inhabitants: Delfino Garcia in summer 1963 and Agapita Lopez in fall 1966.

54. Interviews with penitente members at Abiquiú, summers of 1965 and 1967.

55. José Espinosa, *Saints in the Valley* (Albuquerque, 1960), p. 75.

56. Domínguez, *Missions,* p. 50 (ftn. 5), defines *varal* and its customary use.

silhouette dates the bell as being cast after 1760. Behind the bell rests the *morada* death cart. Also in the room are a plank ladder and the oil drum stove raised on an *adobe* dais (Figure 23) to the east of the exterior door.

Sacristy in Both Moradas.—While a panelled wooden box in the south *morada* stands inside the exterior door of the east room, another type of chest, said to hold cooking utensils, rests in the northwest corner of the center room of the east *morada*. Both storage chests are located in rooms with corner fireplaces. An informant said that these boxes held heating and cooking utensils and ceremonial equipment, including the *penitentes'* rule book. As noted above, the two fireplaces in the middle room of the east *morada* suggest that it was built earlier than the south *morada*, which has a single fireplace in the less active and more convenient rear storage room. Further evidence of this point is that the storage chest in the east *morada* is better constructed than that in the south *morada;* the former displays a slanted top and punch-decorated tin reinforcements on its corners. In the center room there are several benches with lathe-turned legs (Figure 24).

The central room of the south *morada* also displays a number of benches of an earlier style (Figure 25). Over the rear door appears an unusual cross (Figure 26). The cross consists of two wood planks, 1.6 centimeters thick, notched together and covered with paper. The surface bears carefully drawn, or perhaps stenciled, floral and religious designs in indigo blue: eleven Latin crosses appear among flowering vases, oversize buds, and 4-, 5-, and 8-pointed stars. These motifs probably are the result of copying from weaving or quilt pattern books of the late 19th century. A local *penitente* leader stated that the cross was made before 1925 by Onésimo Martínez of Abiquiú, when the latter was in his thirties. (The strong religious symbolism of the New Mexican designs reminds one of the stylized motifs on Atlantic Coastal folk drawings and textiles of Germanic origin.)

Snare drums appear in the central room of both *moradas* (Figures 27, 28). The drum in the east *morada* is mounted on top of a truncated wicker basket. It is interesting to note that rifles and drums commonly are recorded in mission choir lofts in 1776 by Domínguez.[57] In addition to marking significant moments in church ritual, they are used in Indian and *Hispano* village *fiestas*.

57. Ibid., pp. 107, 131 (ftn. 4), 167.

Before describing religious objects in the west end rooms of Abiquiú *moradas,* a list of similar items in Santo Tomás Mission at an earlier date (1776) is of interest:

> a medium-sized bell . . . altar table . . . gradin . . . altar cloth . . . a banner . . . candleholders . . . processional cross . . . a painted wooden cross . . . ordinary single-leaved door . . . image in the round of Our Lady of the [Immaculate] Conception . . . a wig . . . silver crown . . . string of fine seed pearls . . . ordinary bouquet . . . painting on copper of Our Lady of Sorrows (*Dolores*) in a black frame . . . *Via Crucis* in small paper prints on their little boards . . . a print of the Guadalupe.[58]

Comparable versions of each of these objects occur in Abiquiú's *moradas*. In fact, virtually all objects found in the *penitente moradas* of Abiquiú are recorded as typical artifacts by church inventories and house wills of 18th- and 19th-century Spanish New Mexico.[59]

Oratory in the East Morada.—In the rear of the oratory of the older east *morada* (Figure 12), one sees a stove and lantern on the right. Both are imported, extracultural items. The pierced, tin candle-lantern (Figure 29) is a common artifact found throughout Europe and America.[60]

Along the walls of the oratory hang imported religious prints framed in local punch-decorated tinwork. Tin handicraft became more widespread after 1850 when metal U.S. Army containers became available to the *Hispanos*. Designs seen on three tin frames (Figure 30) include twisted columns, crests, scallops, corner blocks, wings, and a variety of simple repoussé patterns. Paper prints in the tin frame suggest midcentury trade contacts between northern Mexico and the Atlantic Coast. Even the Mexican War (1846–1848) did not discourage American publishers such as Currier from appealing to Mexican religious and national loyalties with lithographs of Our Lady of Guadalupe (much in the same manner as the British, after the Revolution and War of 1812, profited by selling Americans objects that

58. Ibid., pp. 121–123.

59. AASF Loose Documents, Mission, 1680–1850, and Accounts, books xxxxv and lxiv. Also in Wills and Hijuelas, State Records Center, and in Twitchell documents, Land Management Bureau, both offices in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

60. Walter Hough, *Collections of Heating and Lighting* (Smithsonian Inst. Bull. 141, Washington, D.C., 1928), pl 28a, no. 3.

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bore images of Yankee ships, eagles, and likenesses of Franklin and Washington). A fourth piece of local tinwork (Figure 31) in the east *morada* oratory is a niche for a small figure of the Holy Child of Atocha, *Santo Niño de Atocha*. This advocation of Jesus, like that of His mother in the Guadalupe image, further indicates Mexican influence.[61] The image of the *Atocha* is a product of local craftsmanship.

These representations of religious personages are called *santos*, and their makers, *santeros*. Flat panel paintings are known locally as *retablos*, while sculptured forms are *bultos*. George Kubler, distinguished art historian at Yale, suggests that *bultos*, because of their greater dimensional realism, are more popular than planar *retablos* with the *Hispanos*.[62] Supporting this theory is the fact that *bultos* in the Abiquiú *moradas* outnumber prints and *retablos* two to one.

Perhaps the most distinctive three-dimensional image in any *morada* is not a *santo* by definition, but a unique figure that represents death (*la muerte*). Also known as *La Doña Sebastiana*, her image clearly marks a building as a *penitente* sanctuary. Personifying death with a sculptured image and dragging her cart to a cemetery called *calvario*, the *penitentes* of New Mexico reflect the sense of fate common to Spanish-speaking cultures, the recognition that death is life's one personal certainty.[63] The figure of death in the east *morada* hangs in the corner at the rear of the oratory. Placed outside for examination, this *muerte* (Figure 32) presents a flat, oval face with blank eyes. The black gown and bow and arrow are typical of *muerte* figures.[64] Turning toward the altar (Figure 11), one sees that death is outnumbered by images of hope and compassion: Jesus, His mother, and the saints who intercede for man.

On the lower step of the altar appear a host of small, commercial products, mostly crucifixes, in plaster, plastic, and cheap metal alloys as well as numerous glass cups for candles. Above the upper ledge (*gradin*) appear five locally made images of Jesus crucified, *El Cristo*.[65] At the side of this central *Cristo* (Figure 33) hangs a small angel, *angelito*, which traditionally held a chalice to catch blood from the spear wound. Other *Cristos*, at the Taylor Museum in Colorado Springs and at the Museum of New Mexico (McCormick Collection A.7.49–24) in Santa Fe, repeat the weightless corpus and stylized wounds used by the anonymous *santero* who, after 1850, made these *bultos*.

Additional *Cristo* figures appear on the convergent walls of the east *morada* sanctuary. There are two pairs, large and small, perhaps dating as late as 1900, one pair to the right (Figures 34, 35), the other, on the Gospel side (plates 36, 37).

To the far left stands an important image: the scouraged Jesus (Figure 38) prominent in *penitente* activity as "Our Father Jesus the Nazarene" (*Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno*). By 1918, Alice Corbin Henderson [66] reports, this same figure appeared in *penitente* Holy Week processions at Abiquiú. She claims it was made originally for the Mission of Santo Tomás. E. Boyd points out stylistic traits shared by this Abiquiú *bulto* and the *retablo* figures in the San José de Chama Chapel at nearby Hernández, which was the work of *santero* Rafael Aragon, active from 1829 to after 1855.[67] Symbolic of man's physical suffering, the image of the *Jesus Nazareno* is essential to *penitente* enactments of the Passion.

On the left side of the east *morada* altar, two carved images represent the grieving mother of Jesus as "Our Lady of Sorrows" (*Nuestra Señora de los Dolores*), one image (Figure 39) in pink equipped with her attribute, a dagger; the other (Figure 40), like many processional figures, has been constructed by draping a pyramidal frame of four sticks with gesso-dipped cloth,

61. Stephen Borhegyi, *El Santuario de Chimayo* (Santa Fe, 1956); also E. Boyd, *Saints and Saint Makers* (Santa Fe, 1946), pp. 126–132.

62. George Kubler, in *Santos: An Exhibition of the Religious Folk Art of New Mexico with an Essay by George Kubler* (Fort Worth, Tex.: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, June 1964).

63. A fuller discussion of the *penitente* death cart and further illustrations are found in Mitchell A. Wilder and Edgar Breitenbach, *Santos: The Religious Folk Art of New Mexico* (Colorado Springs, 1943), pl. 30 and text. Relevant to this study is the death cart with immobile wheels recorded by Henderson, p. 32 [see ftn. 64], as having been used in processions before 1919. It is likely that this is the same cart described above in the storage room of the east *morada* (Figure 22); it is important because its measurements and construction details are nearly identical to the death cart in the collections of the Museum of New Mexico, reputed to have come from Abiquiú.

64. Alice Corbin Henderson, *Brothers of Light* (Chicago, 1962), p. 32, describes a *muerte* figure: chalk-white face, obsidian eyes, black outfit.

65. E. Boyd, "Crucifix in Santero Art," *El Palacio*, vol. LX, no. 3 (March 1953), pp. 112–115, indicates the significance of this image form.

66. Henderson, pp. 13 (red gown, blindfolded, flowing black hair), 26 (red gown, bound hands, made for mission), and 43–46 (tall, almost life size, blindfolded, carried on small platform in procession from lower [east] *morada*, horsehair rope).

67. Boyd, in litt., Nov. 13, 1965.

which, when dry, is painted to represent a skirt. The apron-like design that appears on the skirt, now hidden under a black dress, indicates that the original identity probably was "Our Lady of Solitude" (*Nuestra Señora de la Soledad*).[68]

Also on the left side of the east *morada* altar, there are two male saints (*santos*) who fill vital roles in the *penitente* Easter drama. One, St. Peter (San Pedro) with the cock (Figure 41), is a *bulto* whose frame construction duplicates that of Our Lady (Figure 40). The cock apparently was made by another hand, and, despite its replaced tail, is a fine expression of local art. This group represents Peter's triple denial of Jesus before the cock announced dawn of the day of the Crucifixion. The *bulto* of San Pedro has special meaning for *penitentes* who, through their penance, bear witness to "Jesus the Nazarene."

With the other *bulto*, *penitentes* have also recalled the crucifixion by representing St. John the Evangelist (San Juan) at the foot of the cross, where Jesus charged the disciple with the care of His mother. The image of John (Figure 42) bears distinctive stylistic features: blunt fingers; protruding forehead, cheek bones, and chin; and a full-lipped, open mouth.

Since these stylistic traits also occur in a *Cristo* figure in the Taylor Museum collection[69] and in two other *bultos*—a *Cristo* and *Jesus Nazareno* in the south *morada* at Abiquiú—it seems reasonable to designate the anonymous image-maker as the "Abiquiú *morada santero*."

A *bulto* that Alice Henderson identifies as St. Joseph is probably this figure of St. John (Figure 42) now resting in the east *morada*. She has reported that this image and that of St. Peter were in the mission of Santo Tomás before 1919.[70] The shift in residence for these *santos* was substantiated by José Espinosa, who stated that several images "were removed to one of the local *moradas* . . . when the old church was torn down."[71]

On the right side of the east *morada* altar, images of two male saints reflect the intense affection felt by *penitentes* for the Franciscan saints Anthony of Padua and John of Nepomuk. The most popular New Mexican saint, San Antonio (Figure 43), customarily carries the young Jesus, *El Santo Niño*. This image has been painted dark blue to represent the traditional Franciscan habit of New Mexico before the 1890s.[72]

The 14th-century saint, John of Nepomuk, Bohemia (Figure 44), is known from a legend that states he was killed by King Wenceslaus for refusing to reveal secrets of the Queen, for whom he was confessor. The story notes that, after torture, John was drowned in the Moldau River, but that his body floated all night and, in the morning, was taken to the Church of the Holy Cross of the Penitents in Prague. After the martyred chaplain was canonized in 1729, his cult spread to Rome, then Spain, and, by 1800, into New Mexico.

Among the *Hispanos*, local Franciscans promoted this cult of St. John as a prognosticator and as a respector of secrecy.[73] Due in part to this promotion, *San Juan Nepomuceno* became a favorite of New Mexican *penitentes*. E. Boyd suggests that the image of St. John (Figure 44) may have first represented St. Francis or St. Joseph. She also notes a stylistically similar *bulto* of St. Joseph in Colorado Springs, manufactured not long after 1825.[74]

Oratory in South Morada.—Turning to the south *morada* chapel, we find numerous parallels to the earlier east *morada* in *santo* identities and in religious artifacts. (Figure 10 presents a previously unphotographed view of this active *penitente* chapel with its fully equipped altar.) The walls of the west chamber of the south *morada* are lined with benches over which hang religious prints in frames of commercial plaster and local tinwork (Figure 45).

The tin frame for a lithograph of St. Peter reveals repoussé designs found on east *morada* frames (Figure 30, center). Other examples of local tinwork are seen in Figure 46. On the right is a cross of punched tinwork with pomegranate ends and corner fillers that reflect Moorish characteristics in Spanish arts known as *mudéjar*. The frame dates from after 1850, as indicated by glass panes painted with floral patterns suggesting Victorian wallpaper. To the left is a niche made of six glass panels painted with wavy lines and an early 19th-century woodcut of the Holy Child of Atocha.

68. Boyd, loc. cit. Regarding construction, see E. Boyd, "New Mexican Bultos with Hollow Skirts: How They Were Made," *El Palacio*, vol. LVIII, no. 5 (May, 1951), pp. 145–148.

69. Wilder and Breitenbach, pls. 24, 25.

70. Henderson, p. 26.

71. José Espinosa, op. cit., p. 75.

72. Domínguez, *Missions*, p. 264 (ftn. 59). The brown robe worn by Franciscans today is a late 19th-century innovation.

73. Boyd, *Saints*, p. 133.

74. Boyd, in litt., Nov. 13, 1965. For a comparative illustration of St. Joseph, see Wilder and Breitenbach, pl. 42.

Here again, twisted half-columns repeat a motif seen on a tin frame in the east *morada* chapel. In front of the draped entry to the south *morada* sanctuary stand two candelabra, one of which is shown in the doorway to the oratory (Figure 47) with tin reflectors and hand-carved sockets.[75] There are also vigil light boxes, kerosene lanterns with varnished tin shades, commercial religious images and ornaments that are similar to items in the east *morada* sanctuary.

Embroidered textiles portray the Last Supper, and a chapter banner, made up for the brotherhood after 1925, shows the Crucifixion in oil colors. This banner bears the words "Fraternidad Piadosa D[e] N[uestro] P[adre] J[esus] D[e] Nazareno, Sección No. 12, Abiquiú, New Mexico." The title *fraternidad* is that assumed by *penitente* chapters that incorporated in New Mexico around 1930, although the term *cofradía* often appears in transfers of private land to *penitente* organizations.[76] A second banner, this one on the left, reads "Sociedad de la Sagrada Familia," which is a Catholic women's organization that often supports *penitente* groups.

In the oratory of the south *morada,* locally made images merit special notice. Two carved images flank the entry to the south *morada* sanctuary. The *bulto* on the right, St. Francis of Assisi (Figure 48), has a special significance. As we noted in the east *morada,* many Spanish settlers in New Mexico honored San Francisco as the founder of the Franciscans, the order whose missionaries long had served the region. The second *bulto* (Figure 49) reveals clues that it originally had been a representation of the Immaculate Conception (*Inmaculata Concepción*). In Abiquiú, however, this figure is called *la mujer de San Juan* ("the woman of St. John"), a phrase that indicates the major role Mary holds for the *penitentes.* With this image they refer to the moment in the Crucifixion when Jesus committed the care of His mother to St. John. As introductions to the south *morada* chancel, St. Francis and the Marian image are excellent specimens of pre-1850 *santero* craftsmanship.

Two more images of Mary occur on the altar of the south *morada* sanctuary. The first (Figure 50) takes its proper ecclesiastic position on the Gospel side, to the viewer's left of the crucifix. The second "Marian" image (Figure 51) is less orthodox. Not only does this *bulto* stand on the Epistle side of the crucifix but, like the Marian advocation cited above as *la mujer de San Juan,* this figure's identity has been changed to suit local taste. *Penitentes* at Abiquiú refer to the image as Santa Rosa, the traditional patroness of the area following its first settlement by Spaniards.

Between these Marian images there are two large *bultos* that are examples of the work of the "Abiquiú *morada santero*" suggested earlier. Both are figures of Jesus. The first, a *Cristo* (Figure 52), is the central crucifix on the altar. As in the east *morada,* the focal image is accompanied by an *angelito,* this time with tin wings.[77] To the right stands the other image of Jesus, the Nazarene, *Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno* (Figure 53). Along with the nearby crucifix (Figure 52) and the figure of St. John the Evangelist (Figure 42) in the east *morada,* this representation of the scourged Jesus reflects the style of the "Abiquiú *morada santero.*" This Nazarene *bulto* embodies the *penitente* concept of Jesus as a Man of suffering Who must be followed.

The special character of the *penitente* brotherhood is demonstrated also in the last two *bultos* on the south *morada* altar. The prominent size and position of St. John of Nepomuk (Figure 54) on the altar indicate again the importance given by the *penitentes* to San Juan as a keeper of secrets. The other figure is the south *morada*'s personification of death (Figure 55), *la muerte,* here even more gaunt than the image in the east *morada.* Probably made after 1900, this figure demonstrates the persistent artistic and religious heritage of *Hispano* culture.

Summary

The two Abiquiú *moradas* are clearly parallel in their architectural design (including the constricted chancels), in their artifacts—especially *bulto* identities such as Jesus (*Cristo, Nazareno, Ecce Homo, Santo Niño de Atocha*), Mary (*Dolores, Immaculata Concepción, Soledad, Guadalupe*), Saint John of Nepomuk, Saint Peter, and death—and lastly, in the ceremonies held

75. Henderson, p. 51, notes this pair of candelabra with the 13 sockets. Fifteen is the ecclesiastically correct number for *tenebrae* services.

76. *Acts of Incorporation,* mirofilm, Corporation Bureau, State Capitol, Santa Fe; see also Land Records, *General Indirect Index,* Rio Arriba County Court House, vols. I (1852–1912) and II (1912–1930).

77. Henderson, p. 51, describes the *angelito,* in the dim light of the *morada* ceremony, as a "dove like a wasp." Another angel figure was given me through Regino Salazar by one of the *penitente* brothers of Abiquiú. According to E. Boyd, it appears to be the work of José Rafael Aragon, who worked in the Santa Cruz area after 1825.

in the buildings, which link rather than separate the *penitente* movement and the common social values of *Hispano* culture.

Edmonson uses six institutional values to define *Hispano* culture.[78] All six can be found in the *penitente* brotherhood. "Paternalism" is found in the relation of the members-at-large to the officers and of all the *penitente* brothers to *Nuestro Padre Jesus,* "Our Father Jesus." "Familism" is reflected in the structure of the *penitente* organization and especially in the extension of its social benefits to the entire community. "Dramatism" is an essential ingredient of *penitente* ceremonies such as the *tinieblas.* "Personalism" is revealed in the immediate and individual participation of all members in *penitente* activities. "Fatalism" is the focus of Holy Week and of funerals and is personified by the *muerte* figure in each *morada.*

Finally, Edmonson cited "traditionalism" as definitive of *Hispano* culture, a characteristic that is clearly evident in the *penitente* forms of shelter, ceremonies, and artifacts. These commonplace objects and activities had been established at Abiquiú before and during the period of *morada* building and furnishing. Literary and pictorial documents presented in this study of Abiquiú and the *penitente moradas* reveal that their physical structure, furnishings, membership, and the brotherhood itself are related intimately to, and drawn from, the traditional and persistent Hispanic culture of New Mexico.

78. Edmondson, p. 62.

FIGURE 10. ALTAR IN SOUTH *Morada*. SIZE: 10.05 meters long, 3.51 wide. LOCATION: West room in south *morada*. DESCRIPTION: Looking west into sanctuary; dirt floor with cotton rag rugs; side walls lined with benches and hung with religious prints; square-milled timber ceiling; draped arch with candelabra; altar and gradin with religious images. (Numbers refer to subsequent illustrations.)

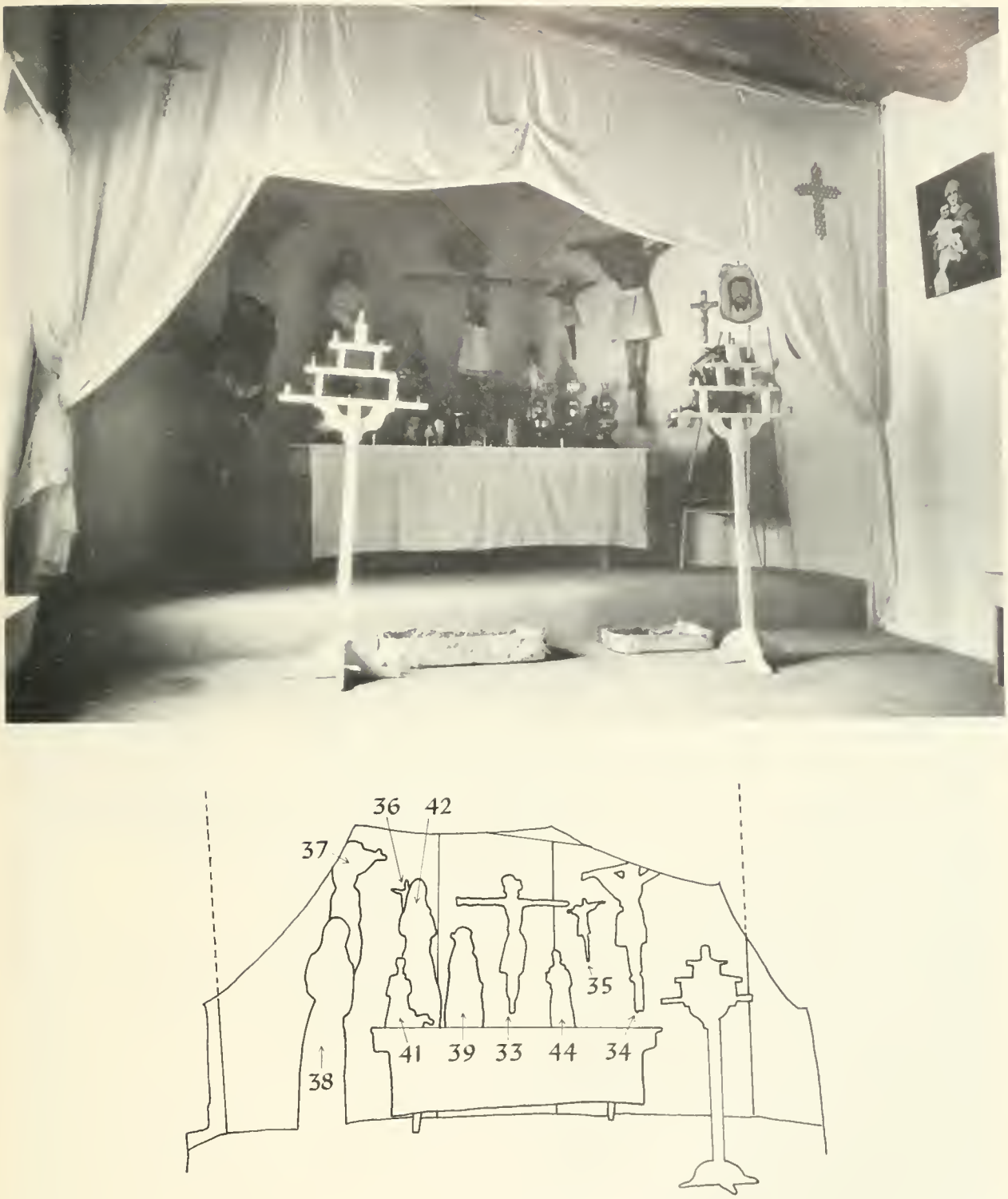

FIGURE 11. ALTAR IN EAST *Morada*. DESCRIPTION: Looking into sanctuary; dirt floor and convergent *adobe* walls; sacristy entry marked by drapes and raised floor; candelabra and sand boxes for votive candles; draped altar table supplied with religious images. (Numbers refer to subsequent illustrations.)

FIGURE 12. REAR OF ORATORY, EAST *Morada*. SIZE: 10.98 meters long, 4.04 wide. LOCATION: Back of west room in east *morada*. DESCRIPTION: Looking east, to rear of oratory. Dirt floor, *adobe*-plastered walls, wooden benches, iron stove, framed religious prints on walls, ceiling of round beams (*vigas*).

opposite

FIGURE 13. FLOOR TUB IN STORAGE ROOM. SIZE: tub 53.3 centimeters high. LOCATION: South *morada,* northwest corner of room. DESCRIPTION: Cement tub, dirt floor, fire wood, galvanized tubs, enamelized buckets, braided cactus whips (*disciplinas*), wooden box rattle (*matraca*), punched tin wall sconce, corrugated metal roofing.

FIGURE 14. RATTLES (*matracas*). SIZE: 26 to 40 centimeters long. LOCATION: South *morada* storage (east) room. DESCRIPTION: Flexible tongue set at one end of wooden frame, and notched cylinder on handle turning in opposite end.

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opposite

FIGURE 15. PENITENTE CROSSES (*maderos*) IN STORAGE ROOM. SIZES: black cross 269.2 centimeters high (Figure 16); ceiling boards 2.5 by 15; *maderos* 345 long. DATE: 20th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified carpenter. LOCATION: South *morada*, northeast corner. DESCRIPTION: black candelabra (*tenebrario*), kerosene lanterns, tin shades, wooden keg and box under table.

FIGURE 16. CROSS AND LADDER (*cruz* and *escalera*). SIZE: cross 269.2 centimeters high. DATE: Fourth quarter of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified carpenter. LOCATION: South *morada*, storage (east) room. DESCRIPTION: Milled and carved wood (painted), black cross and ladder, silvered nails (left arm), hammer and pliers (right arm).

FIGURE 17. CORNER FIREPLACE IN STORAGE ROOM. SIZE: mantel 106.7 centimeters high. LOCATION: South *morada,* southeast corner. DESCRIPTION: Walls, fireplace, and flue of plastered *adobe,* kerosene lamps and tin wall sconces, boarded up window to left (east).

FIGURE 18. STORAGE ROOM, EAST *Morada*. SIZES: Tub 112.6 centimeters long, 46 wide, 25.6 high; ladder 175 high. DESCRIPTION: Detail of north wall showing enamelized containers, tub built into the floor for washing after penance, and ladder.

FIGURE 19. RESERVOIR FOR KEROSENE LAMP. SIZE: 25.4 centimeters wide. DATE: Second half of 19th century. ORIGIN: Imported to New Mexico. LOCATION: East *morada*, storage (east) room. MANUFACTURE: Silver-plated metal stamped into Rococco revival decorations.

FIGURE 20. PROCESSIONAL CROSS. SIZE: 30.5 centimeters high. DATE: 19th century. ORIGIN: Imported to New Mexico, probably from Mexico. LOCATION: East *morada,* storage (east) room. MANUFACTURE: Punched trifoil ends in metal face, cast corpus.

FIGURE 21. PERCUSSION RIFLES. SIZE: 111.8 centimeters long. DATE: Middle of 19th century. ORIGIN: European (Belgian?) exports. LOCATION: East *Morada,* storage (east) room.

FIGURE 23. STORAGE ROOM, EAST *Morada:* View next to exterior door showing low *adobe* dais supporting oil drum stove.

opposite

FIGURE 22. STORAGE ROOM, EAST *Morada.* SIZES: Bell 64 centimeters wide (diameter), 47.4 high; cart 122 long (frame), 70 wide (frame), 71 between axle centers; wheels 45 high. DESCRIPTION: Detail of east wall showing sawhorse table, corrugated sheeting, bell, and death cart of cottonwood and pine.

FIGURE 24. BENCH (*banco*). SIZE: 108 centimeters long, 51 high, 47 wide. LOCATION: East *morada,* center room.

FIGURE 25. BENCH (*banco*). SIZE: 128 centimeters long, 106 high at back, 45 wide. LOCATION: South *morada,* center room.

(*Figure 26 is frontispiece*)

FIGURE 27. SNARE DRUM (*tambor*). SIZE: 55.9 centimeters long. DATE: 19th century. ORIGIN: Imported to New Mexico. LOCATION: East *morada*, center room. MANUFACTURE: Commercially made, military type, rope lines with leather drum ears [tighteners].

FIGURE 28. SNARE DRUM (*tambor*). SIZE: 58.4 centimeters long. DATE: 19th century. ORIGIN: Imported to New Mexico. LOCATION: South *morada*, center room. MANUFACTURE: Commercially made, military type, reddish stain, rope tension lines with rope and leather drum ears [tighteners].

FIGURE 29. CANDLE LANTERN. SIZE: 30.5 centimeters high. DATE: 19th century. ORIGIN: Imported to New Mexico. LOCATION: East *morada*, chapel. MANUFACTURE: Pierced tinwork.

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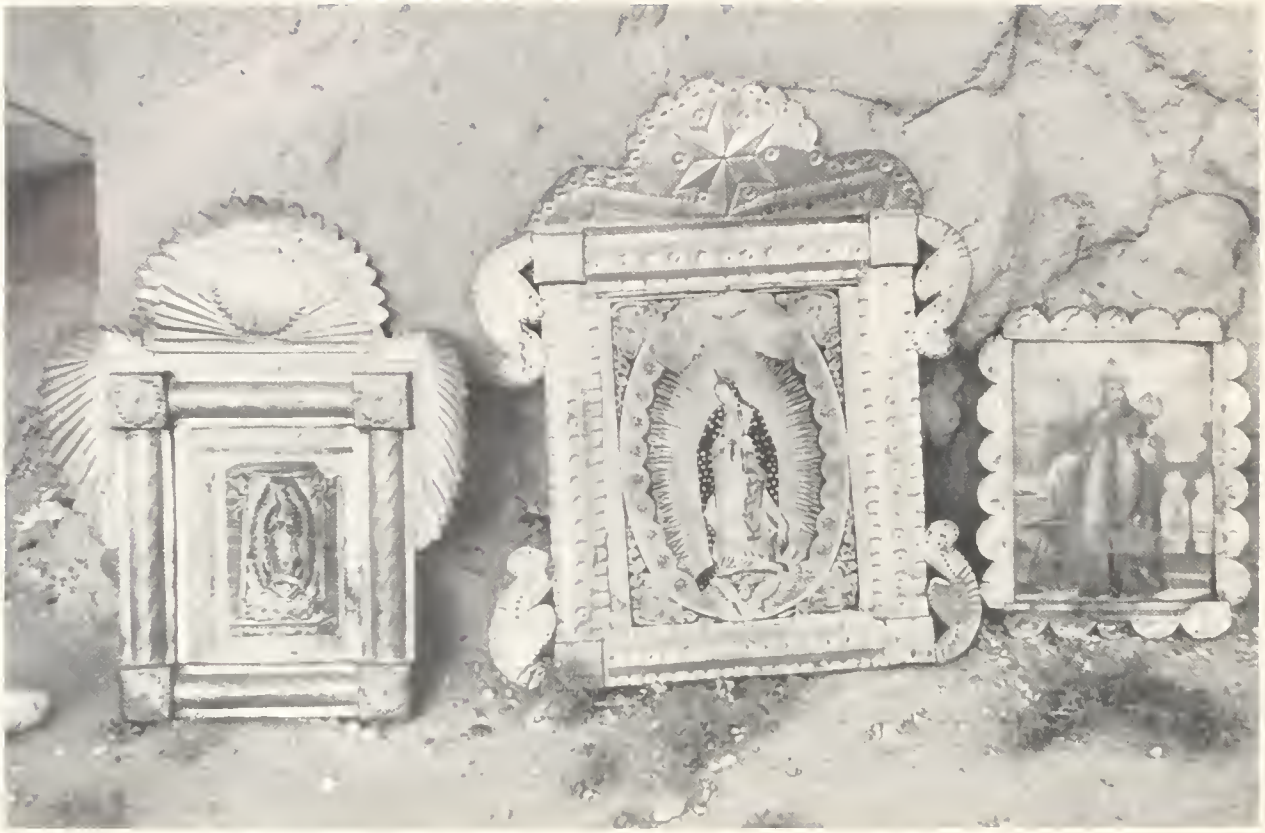

FIGURE 30. RELIGIOUS PRINTS IN TIN FRAMES. SIZE: 52.1 centimeters high (center). DATE: First three-quarters of 19th century. ORIGIN: Prints imported to New Mexico; frames from New Mexico, unidentified tinsmiths. LOCATION: East *morada,* walls in chapel (west) room. MANUFACTURE: Tin frames: cut, repoussé, stamped and soldered into Federal and Victorian designs. Prints: left, *Guadalupe,* early 19th century, Mexican copperplate engraving; center, *Guadalupe,* 1847, N. Currier, hand-colored lithograph; right, *San Gregorio* [Pope St. Gregory], mid-19th-century lithograph.

FIGURE 31. NICHE WITH IMAGE OF THE HOLY CHILD OF ATOCHA (*nicho* and *El Santo Niño de Atocha*). SIZE: niche 44.4 centimeters high, image 21.6 high. DATE: Second half of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified tinsmith and *santero.* LOCATION: East *morada,* wall in chapel room. MANUFACTURE: Tin: cut, repoussé, soldered into fan, shell, and guilloche designs. Image: carved wood, gessoed and painted red and white. Rosary and artificial flowers.

FIGURE 32. DEATH (*la muerte*). SIZE: 76.2 centimeters high. DATE: Early 20th [illegible]. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, back of oratory. MANUFACTURE: Carved and whitewashed wood, glass eyes and wood teeth, dressed in black fabric with white lace border, bow and arrow.

FIGURE 33. CRUCIFIX WITH ANGEL (*Cristo* and *angelito*). SIZE: cross 139.7 centimeters high. DATE: Fourth quarter of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, center of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted, over-painted in oil; crown of thorns, rosaries, crucifix; wooden plank, H-shape platform; black cross with *iNRi* plaque; *angelito* with white cotton skirt.

opposite, top left

FIGURE 34. CRUCIFIX (*Cristo*). SIZE: cross 170.2 centimeters high. DATE: Second half of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, right wall behind altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted, over-painted in oils; black gauze shroud over head; rosary and *iNRi* plaque.

opposite, bottom left

FIGURE 35. CRUCIFIX (*Cristo*). SIZE: cross 64.8 centimeters high. DATE: Second half of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, right wall behind altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; dressed in white skirt with rosary.

opposite, top right

FIGURE 37. CRUCIFIX (*Cristo*). SIZE: cross 177.8 centimeters high. DATE: Fourth quarter of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, left wall behind altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; crown of thorns and rosary; dressed in white cotton waist cloth.

opposite, bottom right

FIGURE 36. CRUCIFIX (*Cristo*). SIZE: cross 71.1 centimeters high. DATE: Second half of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, left wall behind altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted, repainted in oil colors, yellow and red strips on black; dressed in white cotton skirt; rosary.

INRI

opposite

FIGURE 38. MAN OF SORROWS (*Ecce Homo, Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno*). SIZE: 1.60 meters high. DATE: Second quarter of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, Rafael Aragon, active 1829–55. LOCATION: East *morada*, to left of altar. MANUFACTURE: Dressed in red fabric gown, palm clusters and rosaries, leather crown of thorns, horsehair wig, bright border painted on platform.

FIGURE 39. OUR LADY OF SORROWS (*Nuestra Señora de los Dolores*). SIZE: 99.1 centimeters base to crown. DATE: Early 20th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, left side of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; dressed in pink cotton gown and veil; tin crown and metal dagger; artificial flowers, rosaries.

FIGURE 40. OUR LADY OF SORROWS OR SOLITUDE (*Nuestra Señora de los Dolores* or *la Soledad*). SIZE: 81.3 centimeters base to crown. DATE: Second half of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, left side of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood head and hands, gessoed, painted, and repainted; body of gesso-wetted cloth, draped on stick frame to dry, painted; dressed in black satin habit with white lace border; tin halo, rosary, artificial flowers.

FIGURE 41. SAINT PETER AND COCK (*San Pedro* and *Gallo*). SIZE: 61 centimeters high. DATE: First quarter of 19th century, and 19th century cock. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, left side of altar. MANUFACTURE: St. Peter's head (later): carved wood, gessoed and painted. Body: cloth dipped in wet gesso, draped over stick frame to dry, and painted, later over-painted. Blue gown and orange cape. Cock of carved wood, gessoed and painted; orange body with green haunch. Carved wood tail, replacement.

FIGURE 42. SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST (*San Juan*). SIZE: 137.2 centimeters high. DATE: Second half of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, "Abiquiu *morada*" *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, left side of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; black horsehair wig; dressed in white cotton fabric; palm clusters and rosary.

FIGURE 43. SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA AND THE INFANT JESUS (*San Antonio y Niño*). SIZE: 43.2 centimeters high. DATE: First half of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, right side of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted with repainted head; dark blue habit; dressed in light blue cotton fabric with white border, artificial flowers.

FIGURE 44. SAINT JOHN OF NEPOMUK (*San Juan Nepomuceno*). SIZE: base to hat 78.7 centimeters. DATE: Second quarter of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: East *morada*, right side of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; dark blue robe with white border; dressed in black hat and robe under white alblike coat; rosary.

FIGURE 45. SAINT JOSEPH AND CHRIST CHILD (*San José y el Santo Niño*). SIZE: frame 45.7 centimeters high. DATE: Fourth quarter of 19th century. ORIGIN: Imported commercial products. LOCATION: South *morada*, chapel wall. MANUFACTURE: Plaster frame, molded and gilded. Chromo-lithograph on paper. SAINT PETER (*San Pedro*). SIZE: frame 25.4 centimeters high. DATE: Third quarter of 19th century. ORIGIN: Imported, commercially made print. New Mexico, unidentified tinsmith. LOCATION: South *morada*, chapel wall. MANUFACTURE: Tin frame: cut, repoussé, stamped, and soldered. Chromo-lithograph on paper.

FIGURE 46. NICHE WITH PRINT OF CHRIST CHILD (*Nicho* and *Santo Niño de Atocha*). SIZE: 35.5 centimeters high. DATE: Second half of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified tinsmith. LOCATION: South *morada*, chapel walls. MANUFACTURE: Tin frame: cut, repoussé, and soldered. Glass: cut and painted. Woodcut on paper. CROSS (*cruz*). SIZE: 43.2 centimeters high. DATE: Fourth quarter of 19th century. ORIGINS: New Mexico, unidentified tinsmith. LOCATION: South *morada*, chapel walls. MANUFACTURE: Tin frame: cut, repoussé, and soldered. Glass: cut and painted.

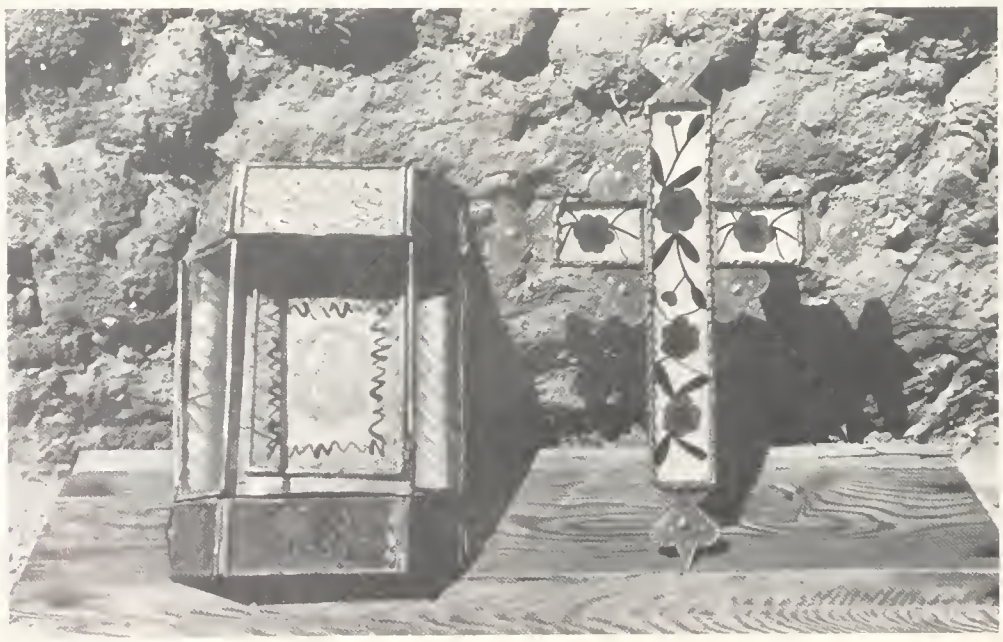

FIGURE 47. CANDELABRUM (*candelabro*). SIZE: 157.5 centimeters high. DATE: Early 20th century. LOCATION: South *morada,* in front of altar in oratory. MANUFACTURE: Mill-cut wood stand, hand-carved pegs to hold candles, and hand-worked tin crosses. Painted white. One of a pair.

FIGURE 48. SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI (*San Francisco*). SIZE: 53.3 centimeters high. DATE: First half of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: South *morada,* right wall of chapel. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; blue habit with brown collar; wood cross and skull, tin halo; rosary beads with fish pendants.

FIGURE 49. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION (*la mujer de San Juan* [local name]). SIZE: 55.9 centimeters high. DATE: First half of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: South *morada,* left wall of chapel. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; oil colors over earlier tempera; red gown and crown; blue cape and base.

FIGURE 50. OUR LADY OF SORROWS (*Nuestra Señora de los Dolores*). SIZE: 104.1 centimeters high. DATE: Third quarter of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: South *morada*, left side of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; dressed in pink satin; artificial flowers, tin crown.

FIGURE 51. VIRGIN AND CHILD OR SAINT RITA (*Santa Rosa de Lima* [local name]). SIZE: 68 centimeters high. DATE: Fourth quarter of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: South *morada*, right side of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; dressed in pink satin; cross of turned wood; artificial flowers, shell crown.

FIGURE 52. CRUCIFIX WITH ANGEL (*Cristo* and *angelito*). SIZE: Cross 144.8 centimeters high. DATE: Early 20th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, "Abiquiu *morada*" *santero*. LOCATION: South *morada*, center of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; purple fabric, waist cloths; tin wings on *angelito*; black cross with *iNRi* plaque.

FIGURE 53. MAN OF SORROWS (*Ecce Homo, Nuestro Padre Jesus Nazareno*). SIZE: 122 centimeters high. DATE: Second half of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, "Abiquiu *morada*" *santero*. LOCATION: South *morada*, right side of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; black horsehair wig, crown of thorns; purple fabric gown; palm clusters, rosaries.

FIGURE 54. SAINT JOHN OF NEPOMUK (*San Juan Nepomuceno*). SIZE: 90.2 centimeters high. DATE: Early 20th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: South *morada*, left side of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved wood, gessoed and painted; dressed in black grown and cap; white cotton cassock; artificial flowers; horsehair wig.

FIGURE 55. DEATH (*la muerte*). SIZES [illegible] centimeters high. DATE: Fourth quarter of 19th century. ORIGIN: New Mexico, unidentified *santero*. LOCATION: South *morada*, left side of altar. MANUFACTURE: Carved and whitewashed wood; glass eyes and bone teeth; dressed in black fabric; rosary, bow and arrow.

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WOMEN'S BATHING AND SWIMMING COSTUME IN THE UNITED STATES

Claudia B. Kidwell

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Figure 1.—Bathing costume, from *The Delineator*, July 1884. (Smithsonian photo 58466.)

Claudia B. Kidwell

Women's Bathing and Swimming Costume in the United States

The evolution of the modern swim suit from an unflattering, restrictive bathing dress into an attractive, functional costume is traced from colonial times to the present. This evolution in style reflects not only the increasing involvement of women in aquatic activities but also the changing motivations for feminine participation. The nature of the style changes in aquatic dress were influenced by the fashions of the period, while functional improvements were limited by prevailing standards of modesty. This mutation of the bathing dress to the swim suit demonstrates the changing attitudes and status of women in the United States, from the traditional image of the subordinate "weaker sex" to an equal and active member of the society.

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Introduction

Women's bathing dress holds a unique place in the history of American costume. This specialized garb predates the age of sports costume which arrived during the last half of the 19th century. Although bathing dress shares this distinction with riding costume, the aquatic garb was merely utilitarian in the late 18th century while riding costume had a fashionable role. From its modest status, bathing gowns and later bathing dresses became more important until their successor, the swimming suit, achieved a permanent place among the outfits worn by 20th century women. The social significance of this accomplishment was best expressed by Foster Rhea Dulles, author of *America Learns to Play*, in 1940, when he wrote:

> The modern bathing-suit . . . symbolized the new status of women even more than the short skirts and bobbed hair of the jazz age or the athleticism of the devotees of tennis and golf. It was the final proof of their successful

assertion of the right to enjoy whatever recreation they chose, costumed according to the demands of the sport rather than the tabus of an outworn prudery, and to enjoy it in free and natural association with men.[1]

Since the prescribed limitations of women's role in any given period are determined and affected by many social factors, the evolution of the bathing gown to the swimming suit may not only be dependent upon the changes in the American woman's way of life, but also may reflect certain technological and sociological factors that are not readily identifiable. The purpose of this paper is to describe the changes in women's bathing dress and wherever pertinent to present the factors affecting these styles.[2]

Anyone who attempts to research the topic of swimming and related subjects will be confronted with a history of varying reactions. Ralph Thomas, in 1904, described his experiences through the years that he spent compiling a book on swimming:

> When asked what I was doing, I have felt the greatest reluctance to say a work on the literature of swimming. People who were writing novels or some other thing of little practical utility always looked at me with a smile of pity on my mentioning swimming. Though I am bound to say that, when I gave them some idea of the work, the pity changed somewhat but then they would say "Why don't you give us a new edition of your Handbook of Fictitious Names?" As if the knowledge of the real name of an author was of any importance in comparison with the discussion of a subject that more or less concerns every human being.[3]

Such reactions toward research about swimming probably discouraged many serious efforts of writing about the subject. Its scant coverage and even omission in histories of recreation or sports may be explained by the fact that swimming cannot be categorized as simply physical exercise, skill, recreation, or competitive sport. In trying to determine the extent to which women swam in times past it is frustrating to observe the historians' masculine bias in researching and reporting social history.

A study of women's bathing dress meets with similar problems, and while a discussion of bathing dress can evoke considerable interest, its nature is usually considered more superficial than serious. Descriptions of, and even brief references to, bathing apparel for women are very scarce before the third quarter of the 19th century. Before this time only decorative costume items were considered worthy of description and bathing costume was not in this category. It is only within comparatively recent times that costume historians have conceded sufficient importance to bathing dress to include meaningful descriptions in their research.

Participation in water activities was widespread in the ancient world although the earliest origins of this activity are unknown. For example, in Greece and, later, in Rome, swimming was valued as a pleasurable exercise and superb physical training for warriors. The more sedentary citizens turned to the baths which became the gathering point for professional men, philosophers, and students. Thus bathing and swimming, combined originally to fulfill the functions of cleansing and exercise purely for physical well being, developed the secondary functions of recreation and social intercourse.

With the rise of the Christian church and its spreading anti-pagan attitudes, many of the sumptuous baths were destroyed. Christian asceticism also may have contributed to the decline of bathing for cleansing. In addition there was a secular belief that outdoor bathing helped to spread the fearful epidemics that periodically swept the continent. Although there is isolated evidence that swimming was valued as a physical skill,[4] swimming and bathing all but disappeared during the Middle Ages.

In 1531, long after the Middle Ages, Sir Thomas Elyot wrote of swimming that

> There is an exercise, whyche is right profitable in extreme danger of warres, but . . . it hathe not ben of longe tyme muche used, specially amoge noble men, perchaunce some reders whl lyttell esteeme it.[5]

This early English writer gave no instructions, but expounded on the value of swimming as a skill that could be useful in time of war.

It herewith becomes necessary to differentiate between bathing and swimming with their attendant

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[1] Foster Rhea Dulles, *America Learns to Play, 1607–1940* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940), p. 363.

[2] The author is indebted to Mrs. Anne W. Murray, formerly Curator in Charge of American Costume, Smithsonian Institution, for the interest she has shown throughout the research and writing of this paper. The difficulties of this work would have been greatly compounded without the benefit of her experience and encouragement.

[3] Ralph Thomas, *Swimming* (London: Sampson Low, Marsten & Company Limited, 1904), p. 15.

[4] Joseph Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1876), pp. 151–152.

[5] Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Governour* (London, 1557), vol. 1, pp. 54–55.

goals, for it was the goals of each activity which influenced the associated customs and costume designs. For this discussion we shall define bathing as the act of immersing all or part of the body in water for cleansing, therapeutic, recreational, or religious purposes, and swimming as the self-propulsion of the body through water. When we refer to swimming it is necessary to distinguish whether it was considered a useful skill, a therapeutic exercise, a recreation, or a competitive sport. Thus it is important to note that while bathing for all purposes and swimming as a physical exercise, recreation, and sport died out during the Middle Ages, the latter continued to be valued as a skill, particularly for warriors. This function of swimming survived to form the link between the ancients and the 17th century.

According to Ralph Thomas, the first book on swimming was written by Nicolas Winmann, a professor of languages at Ingolstadt in Bavaria, and printed in 1528. The first book published in England on swimming was written in Latin by Everard Digby and printed in 1587. As Thomas has stated, Digby's book

> . . . is entitled to a far more important place than the first of the world, because, whereas Winmann had never (up to 1866) been translated or copied or even quoted by any one, Digby has been three times translated; twice into English and once into French and through this latter became and probably still is the best known treatise on the subject.[6]

This French version was first published in 1696 with its purported author being Monsieur Melchisédesh Thévenot. In his introduction Thévenot indicates that he has made use of Digby's book in his own treatise and that he knows of Winmann's publication. The English translation of Thévenot's version became the standard instruction book for English-speaking peoples. Typically, his reasons in favor of men swimming were based on its being a useful skill (i.e., to keep from being drowned in a shipwreck, to escape capture when being pursued by enemies, and to attack an enemy posted on the opposite side of a river).[7]

In the 18th and 19th centuries numerous other publications on swimming appeared — too numerous to deal with in this paper. Nevertheless, the refinement of the art of swimming was not related to the number of instruction books. Few of these books actually offered new insights in comparison with those that were outright plagiarisms or filled with misinformation. In the meantime, bathing was reintroduced and as this activity became more widespread swimming was regarded as more than a useful skill, but only for men.

There is little evidence of women bathing or swimming prior to the 17th century; these activities seem to have been exclusively for men. Nevertheless, Thomas refers to Winmann as writing, in 1538, that

> at Zurich in his day (thus implying that he was an elderly man and that the custom had ceased) the young men and maidens bathed together around the statue of "Saint Nicolai." Even in those days his pupil asks "were not the girls ashamed of being naked?" "No, as they wore bathing drawers—sometimes a marriage was brought about." If any young man failed to bring up stones from the bottom, when he dived, he had to suffer the penalty of wearing drawers like the girls.[8]

Thomas goes on to say that the only evidence he had found of women swimming in England in early days was in a ballad entitled "The Swimming Lady" and dating from about 1670. Despite these isolated references it was not until the 19th century that women were encouraged to swim.

After its decline in the Middle Ages, bathing achieved new popularity as a medicinal treatment for both men and women. In England this revival occurred in the 17th century when certain medical men held that bathing in fresh water had healing properties. The resultant spas, which were developed at freshwater springs to effect such "cures," expanded rapidly as the number of their devotees increased. By the mid-18th century, rival practitioners claimed even greater health-giving properties for sea water both as a drink and for bathing. An economic benefit resulted when, tiny, poverty-stricken fishing hamlets became famous through the patronage of the wealthy in search of health as well as pleasure.

When the early colonists left England in the first half of the 17th century, the beliefs and practices they had acquired in their original homes were brought to the new world. Thus, it is important to note that during this period in Europe, swimming was a skill practiced by few, primarily soldiers and sailors. It was not until the second half of the century that bathing for therapeutic purposes was becoming popular in the old world.

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[6] Thomas, op. cit. (footnote 3), p. 172.

[7] Melchisédesh Thévenot, *The Art of Swimming* (London: John Lever, 1789), pp. 4–5.

[8] Thomas, op. cit. (footnote 3), p. 161.

The earliest reference to women's bathing costume has been quoted previously in Winmann's amazing description of mixed bathing at Zurich. He referred to women, wearing only drawers, bathing with men as a custom no longer practiced when he wrote his book in 1538.

One of the earliest illustrations of bathing costume I have located is part of a painted fan leaf, about 1675, that was reproduced in volume 9 of Maurice Leloir's *Histoire du Costume de l'Antiquité* in 1914. In one corner of this painting, which depicts a variety of activities going on in the Seine and on the river banks at Paris, women are shown immersing themselves in water within a covered wooden frame. They are wearing loose, light-colored gowns and long headdresses. An English source of the late 17th century described a very similar costume.

> The ladye goes into the bath with garments made of yellow canvas, which is stiff and made large with great sleeves like a parson's gown. The water fills it up so that it's borne off that your shape is not seen, it does not cling close as other lining.[9]

In the course of my contacts with other costume historians I have encountered the belief that women did not wear any bathing costume before the mid-19th century. Supporting this theory I have seen a reproduction of a print, about 1812, showing women bathing nude in the ocean at Margate, England, but the evidence already presented indicates clearly that costume was worn earlier. Also certain English secondary sources refer to a nondescript chemise type of bathing dress that was worn during the first quarter of the 19th century. Because little study has been given European bathing costume, it is not possible to conjecture under what circumstances costume was or was not used. We do know, however, that when bathing became popular in the new world bathing gowns were worn by some women in the old.

Cultural Environment

As many European cultural traits were transmitted to the new world via England, so was the introduction of water activities. Nevertheless it required a number of years for such cultural refinements as bathing to take root in the new environment. The early colonists brought with them a limited knowledge of swimming, but they did not have the leisure to cultivate this skill. In New England the Puritan religious and social beliefs were as restrictive as the lack of leisure time. In this harsh climate, self-indulgence in swimming and bathing did not fulfill the requirements of being righteous and useful. Thus the growing popularity of bathing among the wealthy in Europe during the 17th and early 18th centuries had little initial impact in the new world.

Although swimming as a skill predated the introduction of bathing to the new world, I will first discuss bathing since the customs and facilities established for it reveal the development of swimming in America, first for men and then for women.

BATHING

One of the earliest sources showing an appreciation of mineral waters for bathing in the new world is a 1748 reference in George Washington's diary to the "fam'd Warm Springs."[10] At that time only open ground surrounded the springs which were located within a dense forest.

Another entry for July 31, 1769, records his departure with Mrs. Washington for these springs (now known as Berkeley Springs, West Virginia) where they stayed more than a month. They were accompanied by her daughter, Patsy Custis, who was probably taken in hope of curing a form of epilepsy with which she was afflicted. In the latter part of the 18th century hundreds of visitors annually flocked to these springs. Although the accommodations were primitive, we early note that the avowed therapeutic aims for visiting these waters were very quickly combined with a growing social life on dry land.

> Rude log huts, board and canvas tents, and even covered wagons, served as lodging rooms, while every party brought its own substantial provisions of flour, meat and bacon, depending for lighter articles of diet on the "Hill folk," or the success of their own foragers. A large hollow scooped in the sand, surrounded by a screen of pine brush, was the only bathing-house; and this was used alternately by ladies and gentlemen. The time set apart for the ladies was announced by a blast on a long tin horn, at which signal all of the opposite sex retired to a prescribed distance, . . . Here day and night passed in a round of

[9] Celia Fiennes, *Through England on Horseback*, as quoted in Iris Brooke and James Laver, *English Costume from the Fourteenth through the Nineteenth Century* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), p. 252.

[10] George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington*, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. (Washington: United States Congress, 1931), vol. 1, p. 8.

eating and drinking, bathing, fiddling, dancing, and reveling. Gaming was carried to a great excess and horse-racing was a daily amusement.[11]

The more permanent bath houses found at the increasing number of springs in the early 19th century were really only shanties built where the water bubbled up. Nevertheless, as civilization moved in upon these resorts, the current taboos and mores were soon imposed. These gave rise to customs, facilities, and inventions peculiar to the pastime. The more permanent facilities carefully separated men from women. Frequently the women's bath was located a considerable distance from the men's and surrounded by a high fence. Female attendants were at hand to wait upon the ladies, and private rooms were prepared for their use both before and after bathing.

In the early 19th century the fame of Berkeley Springs was eclipsed temporarily by the growing popularity of other springs, such as Saratoga in the north and White Sulphur Springs in the south. The newest facilities, however, and the completion of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, restored Berkeley to its former prosperity in the early 1850s.

The bath houses at Berkeley Springs in the 1850s are an example of the facilities that were considered convenient, extensive, and elegant during this period. The gentlemen's bath house contained fourteen dressing rooms and ten large bathing rooms. In addition to the plunge baths, which were twelve feet long, five feet wide, and four and a half feet deep, the men had a swimming bath that was sixty feet long, twenty feet wide, and five feet deep. The ladies' and men's bath houses were located on opposite sides of the grove. As if this were not reassuring enough, we are told that the building for the weaker sex was surrounded by several acres of trees. Thus protected, feminine bathers could choose either one of the nine private baths or the plunge bath, which was thirty feet long by sixteen feet wide and four and a half feet deep, as well as use a shower or artificial warm baths.[12]

The differences between the two bath houses show that women were not as active in the water as the men. Judging from the kind of facilities that were provided at Berkeley Springs, the ladies did less "plunging" than the men and no swimming.

Although accepted in England, bathing in salt water did not become popular in the new world until some time after bathing at springs was established.

In 1794 a Mr. Bailey announced that he planned to institute "bathing machines and several species of entertainment" at his resort on Long Island.[13] "A machine of peculiar construction for bathing in the open sea" was advertised a few years later by a hotel proprietor at Nahant, Massachusetts.[14] There is some question as to what the term "bathing machine" describes. Existing records show that W. Merritt of New York City received a patent dated February 1, 1814, for a "bathing machine." Unfortunately neither a description nor a drawing can be found today. European patents from the first half of the 19th century reveal that a bathing machine could be a contraption in which an individual bathed in privacy. This is what the above quotations seem to be describing. In general usage, however, "bathing machine" could also have been a device in which an individual removed his clothing to prepare for bathing; this type will be described later.

By the early 19th century floating baths were established in every city of any importance including Boston, Salem, Hartford, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Richmond, Charleston, and Savannah. One bath located at the foot of Jay Street in New York City was described as follows:

> The building is an octagon of seventy feet in diameter, with a plank floor supported by logs so as to sink the center bath four feet below the surface of the water, but in the private baths the water may be reduced to three or even two feet so as to be perfectly safe for children. It is placed in the current so always to be supplied with ocean and pure water and rises and falls with the tide.[15]

As was true at the springs, men and women were segregated; but in the floating baths they were only separated by being in different compartments rather than in different bath houses.

Although there were a number of these baths there were not enough to cover all of the inviting river banks and sea shores. There are many instances of men en-

[11] John J. Moorman, *The Virginia Springs* (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1854), pp. 259-260.

[12] Ibid., p. 264.

[13] Henry Wansay, *An Excursion to the United States* (Salisbury: J. Easton, 1798), p. 211, as quoted in Dulles, *America Learns to Play*, p. 152.

[14] Fred Allan Wilson, *Some Annals of Nahant* (Boston: Old Corner Book Store, 1928), p. 77, as quoted in Dulles, *America Learns to Play*, p. 152.

[15] *New York Evening Post* (June 4, 1813).

Figure 2.—"Bathing Party, 1810," painting by William P. Chappel.
(Courtesy of Museum of the City of New York.)

joying the water of undeveloped shores and there is some evidence of women venturing into the bays and rivers (fig. 2).

Nevertheless, few women ventured into the open ocean during the early 19th century. They were generally afraid to brave the force of the ocean waves with only a female companion, since prevailing attitudes regarding the proper behavior of a lady prevented them from being accompanied by a man. When a few ignored this dictate, their bold actions gave rise to "ill-founded stories of want of delicacy on the part of the females." [16] An unbiased traveler, who gave an account of this mixed bathing in 1833, stated that parties always went into the water completely dressed and for that reason he could see no great violation of modesty. Mixed bathing at the seashore (fig. 3) was gaining acceptance, however, when it was reported only thirteen years later that ". . . ladies and gentlemen bathe in company, as is the fashion all along the Atlantic Coast. . . ." [17]

In place of the dressing rooms available in the floating baths, special facilities were frequently provided. The bathing machine—in this case a device in which one changed clothes—was used where there was a gentle slope down to the water. This species of bathing machine was a small wooden cabin set on very high wheels with steps leading down from a door in the front. The bather entered and, while he was changing, the machine was pulled into the sea by a horse. When water was well above the axles the horse was uncoupled and taken ashore. The bather was then free to enter the sea by descending the steps

[16] James Stuart, *Three Years in North America* (Edinburgh: Robert Cadwell, 1833), vol. 1, p. 441.

[17] J. W. and N. Orr, *Orr's Book of Swimming* (New York: Burns and Baner, 1846) as quoted in Thomas, op. cit. (footnote 3), p. 270.

pointed away from the shore (fig. 4). Machines of the 18th and early 19th century were frequently equipped with an awning which shielded the bather from public view as she or he descended the steps to enter the water. These awnings were left off the bathing machines during the last half of the 19th century. Such machines were used to a great extent in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. In the United States, however, they were used only to a limited extent during the first half of the 19th century. By 1870 they had practically disappeared—being replaced by the stationary, sentry-box type of individual structure and the large communal bath house.

"Sentry-boxes" were used before the 1870s at beaches where the terrain did not encourage the use of the bathing machines. At Long Branch, New Jersey, and at one of the beaches at Newport, Rhode Island, lines of these stationary structures were available to the bather for changing, one half designated for women and the other half for men. Hours varied but it was the practice to run up colored flags to signal bathing times for the ladies and then the gentlemen. A male correspondent wrote from Newport in 1857:

> If you are social and wish to bathe promiscuously, you put on a dress and go in with the ladies, if you want to cultivate the "fine and froggy art of swimming," unencumbered by attire, you wait until the twelve o'clock red-flag is run up—when the ladies retire.[18]

From its early beginnings, in the late 18th and early 19th century, the summer excursion to the resorts and spas grew in popularity. In 1848, a writer of a Philadelphia fashion report explained that

> Very few ladies of fashion are now in town, most of them being birds of passage during the last of July and all of August. Most Americans seem to have adopted the fashion of visiting watering-places through the summer.[19]

As the summer excursion became a social event, the recreational possibilities of bathing overshadowed its earlier therapeutic function. Bathing became part of an increasingly elaborate schedule of activities where each event—bathing, dining, concerts, balls, promenades, carriage rides—had its appointed time, place, and proper costume.

Figure 3.—"Scene at Cape May," *Godey's Lady's Book*, August 1849. (*Courtesy of The New York Public Library.*)

In addition to stiff ocean breezes, seaside resorts had an extra appeal that beguiled visitors away from the spas—namely mixed bathing. For during the bathing hour at the seashore all the stiffness and etiquette of select society was abandoned to pleasure.

> Again and again I try it. Delirium! I forget even Miss ——, and dive headforemost into the billows. I rush to meet them. I jump on their backs. I ride on their combs, or I let them roll over me. . . . I am in the thickest of the bathers, and amid the roar of waves, am driven wild with excitement by the shouts of laughter; burst of noisy merriment, and little jolly female shrieks of fun. All are wild with excitement, ducking, diving, splashing, floating, rollicking.[20]

Thus bathing was transformed from a medicinal treatment to a pleasurable pursuit.

Excursionists had to be hardy individuals, firm in their resolve to complete their trip. Although

[18] "Life at Watering-Places—Our Newport Correspondent," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (August 29, 1857), vol. 4, no. 91, p. 197.

[19] "Chit-Chat upon Philadelphia Fashions for August," *Godey's Lady's Book* (August 1848), vol. 37, p. 119.

[20] "My First Day at Cape May," *Peterson's Magazine* (August 1856), vol. 30, no. 2, p. 91.

Figure 4.—"The Bathe at Newport," by Winslow Homer, *Harper's Weekly Newspaper*, September 1858. (Smithsonian photo 59665.)

many railroad lines had been completed by the 1850s, transportation problems were by no means solved. For example, a New York tourist who planned to enjoy a summer at Lake George had to travel by boat from New York City to Albany and Troy, then by railroad to Morean Corner, and, finally, by stage to the lake. After listing the difficulties endured by excursionists, a particularly embittered correspondent commented in 1856, ". . . we envy these happy people in nothing but the power to be idle." [21]

By the 1870s, travel facilities were rapidly being improved and many new summer resorts were established which appealed to a larger segment of the population.

> Comparatively few can stay long at one time at the springs or seaside resorts, and hence the peculiar value of arrangements like those for enabling multitudes to take frequent short pleasant excursions down the New York Bay and along the Atlantic coast, as well as up the Hudson, and through Long Island Sound.[22]

Beaches that catered to a large cross-section of the population provided a wide variety of informal activities that replaced the established functions found at the more select bathing resorts. For example, the illustration of Coney Island in 1878 (fig. 5) shows a puppet show; pony rides for children; a hurdy gurdy; vendors of walking sticks, sunglasses,

[21] *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (July 26, 1856), vol. 2, no. 33, p. 102.

[22] "Summer Recreation," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (June 18, 1870), vol. 30, no. 768, p. 210.

Figure 5.—"Scenes and Incidents on Coney Island," *Harper's Weekly Newspaper*, August 1878. (Smithsonian photo 59666.)

and food; and guide ropes in the water for timid bathers.

In the 1890s foreign visitors were impressed by American concern with finding opportunities to play; early in the century they had remarked on the apparent lack of interest in amusements. The term, "summer resorts," no longer referred to a relatively small number of fashionable watering places. The *New York Tribune* was running eight columns of summer hotel advertisements aimed directly at the middle class. The popular *Summer Tourist and Excursion Guide* listed moderate-priced hotels and railroad excursions; it was a far departure from the fashionable tour of the 1840s.

Thus, as economic and technological factors changed, bathing was transformed from a medicinal treatment for the leisure class to a recreation enjoyed by a large portion of the population.

SWIMMING

As has been stated earlier, swimming was being practiced by men in Europe when the early colonists were leaving their old homes. Nevertheless, the task of establishing new homes left them little time to practice the "art of swimming" or to teach it to fellow colonists.

Benjamin Franklin is no doubt the most famous early proponent of swimming in the colonies. In his autobiography written in the form of a letter to his son in 1771, Franklin revealed his early interest in swimming.

> I had from a child been delighted with this exercise, had studied and practiced Thévenot's motions and position, and added some of my own, aiming at the graceful and easy, as well as the useful.[27]

[27] Jared Sparks, *The Works of Benjamin Franklin* (Boston: Tappan and Whittemore, 1844), vol. I, pp. 65–66.

Benjamin Franklin used every opportunity to encourage his friends to learn to swim.

> as I wish all men were taught to do in their youth; they would, on many occurrences, be the safer for having that skill, and on many more the happier, as freer from painful apprehensions of danger, to say nothing of the enjoyment in so delightful and wholesome an exercise.[24]

Not only was Franklin in favor of being able to swim but when requested he advised friends on methods for how to teach oneself. His instructions, in his letter of September 28, 1776 to Mr. Oliver Neale, were published a number of times even as late as the 1830s.

America's first swimming school was established at Boston in 1827 by Francis Liefer. Two expert swimmers, John Quincy Adams and John James Audubon, the ornithologist, visited the school and each expressed delight at having found such an establishment.

Numerous books instructing men how to swim were brought into the United States in the early 19th century and some were republished here, but the first original work (i.e., not a plagiarism) by an American was not published until 1846. In this book the author, James Arlington Bennet, M.D., LL.D., based his instructions upon his own personal observations as an experienced swimmer. Dr. Bennet's publication requires special note not only due to the basic value of the information but because of the extraordinary title (i.e., *The Art of Swimming Exemplified by Diagrams from Which Both Sexes May Learn to Swim and Float on the Water; and Rules for All Kinds of Bathing in the Preservation of Health and Cure of Disease, with the Management of Diet from Infancy to Old Age, and a Valuable Remedy Against Sea-sickness*). Thanks to this explicit title we learn that Dr. Bennet was in favor of women learning to swim. This energetic aquatic activity had long been considered a masculine skill and, despite such a significant publication, this attitude continued until much later in the century.

We have already noted in a previous discussion that the Berkeley Springs bath houses of the 1850s provided a swimming bath for men but no similar facilities for women. Also at certain seaside resorts of the same period, a special time was set for men to practice the art of swimming without clothing, but women had no similar opportunity. When the ladies entered the water they were clothed from head to toe because men were also present. The description of women's bathing costume, which will appear in a later section, clearly shows that women could do little more than try to maintain their footing. Undoubtedly some "brazen" women did find the opportunity to swim, but the general attitude was that women should only immerse themselves in water.

By the 1860s there was a widespread health movement which gave additional momentum to the belief that physical exercise was good for one's well-being. As a result, women were being encouraged to emerge from their state of physical inactivity imposed by social custom. Swimming had already gained recognition as a healthful exercise for men, but with this fresh approach it was even being suggested that women should swim. A column that appeared in 1866, entitled "Physical Exercise for Females," asserted that

> Bathing, as it is practiced at our coast resorts, is, no doubt, a delightful recreation; but if to it swimming could be added, the delight would be increased, and the possible use and advantage much extended.[25]

In answer to the possible objection that the facilities for teaching were not always available, the writer maintained that in addition to the seashore there were rivers, lakes, and ponds as well as the swimming baths found in most large cities. He further asserted that if the demand were great enough, certain days could be appropriated exclusively to women as was done in some of the London baths.

The type of baths referred to in this case were not built simply to supply a health-giving treatment or for recreation as described earlier. As part of the health movement mentioned above, there was a growing concern in regards to personal cleansing; it was realized that merely splashing water on the face in the morning was not sufficient for good personal hygiene. While facilities for washing the whole body were being installed in wealthy homes, there was also a growing concern for the masses of people who could not afford such extravagance. Thus philanthropic individuals encouraged the building of public swimming baths in densely populated, low income areas. It was hoped that, although the patrons would be covered by bathing costume and would be seeking refreshment and recreation, this unaccustomed contact with water would improve their personal hygiene.

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[24] J. Frost, *The Art of Swimming* (New York: P. W. Gallaudet, 1818), p. 57.

[25] *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (August 25, 1866), vol. 22, no. 569, p. 355.

In 1870 a reporter for *Leslie's*, who was describing two elegant large bathhouses (the type described above) in New York City, stated that Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays were set apart for ladies and Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays for gentlemen. These baths became quite popular in the large cities, particularly among people who could not afford the time or money to make trips even to the near seaside resorts. By the 1880s they were so popular that bathing time was scheduled to allow many sets of bathers to enjoy the water. Thus a number of women who had probably never been completely covered with water before had the opportunity to learn to swim.

While women were being encouraged to practice swimming as a healthful exercise, this activity was being recognized as a recreation and sport for men. The increasing affluence during the last three decades of the 19th century, which made possible the widespread popularity of summer excursions, encouraged swimming as an individual pastime as well as a growing spectator sport. This was true not only for swimming but for nearly every sport we enjoy today. In 1871 a reporter wrote:

> It is not underrating the interest attached to yachting or rowing matches, to say that swimming clubs and swimming matches can be made to create wider and more useful emulation among "the Million" who can never participate in or benefit by those notable trials of skill and muscle.[26]

By the 1890s this growing interest in spectator and individual sports evidenced several interesting results. Separate sporting pages were established in the formats of many newspapers. In addition to being a summer pastime, "the art of swimming" became an intercollegiate and Olympic sport, and was included on the roster of events for the 1896 revival of the Olympic Games held in Athens. Innovations in facilities and techniques helped to alter the character of swimming. The most notable of these were the development of the indoor pool and the introductions of the crawl stroke into the United States.

It was in this time period that swimming for women was becoming socially acceptable. In 1888, Goucher College, a prominent girls' school, built its own indoor pool and the following year swimming was listed in its catalog for the first time. Writers, in turn, no longer felt it necessary to convince readers that women should be more active in the water, but concentrated instead on what a woman should know when she swims. This changing attitude gained world-wide recognition in 1912 at Stockholm when the 100-meter swimming event for women was included in the schedule.

The period of prosperity following World War I brought a marked increase in the appreciation of recreation, resulting in an increase of swimming pools and available beaches. Indoor pools, which made swimming a year-round activity, were becoming even more numerous than beaches. Swimming was now established as a sport and a recreation for both men and women. According to a 1924 magazine article in the *Delineator*, seldom was a swimming meet held anywhere in the country without events for women. At Palm Beach, however, one of the few remaining citadels of "high society," an axiom of fashion dictated that a lady or gentleman not go into the water before 11:45 in the morning; should one do so, one ran the risk of being taken for a maid or valet. The masses, however, swam for pleasure without regard to the inhibitions of high fashion.

This period was also marked by the advent of swimming personalities of both sexes. Johnny Weissmuller became a popular hero for his accomplishments in competitive swimming from 1921 to 1929. Even before the war Annette Kellerman, star of vaudeville and movies, had become famous for her fancy diving as well as her celebrated figure, which she daringly exhibited in a form-fitting, one-piece suit. In addition to writing an autobiography, she authored articles and a swimming instruction book for women. As an example of what exercise, including swimming, could do for women, Annette Kellerman also lent her name to a course of physical culture for less "well-developed" ladies. Another product of this new age of recreation was Gertrude Ederle, who learned to swim at the Woman's Swimming Association of New York. She rose to sudden fame in 1926 as the first woman to swim the English Channel.

As previously stated, swimming was practiced through the Middle Ages as a useful skill for men. Gradually this activity became regarded as also a healthful exercise and then as a recreation. Finally by the late 19th century swimming also had achieved the status of a competitive sport—but for men only. It was not until the 1920s that social attitudes permitted women the same full use of the water as men.

The restrictive attitudes defining women's proper behavior in the water prior to the 1920s were one

[26] Ibid. (July 29, 1871), vol. 32, no. 826, p. 322.

element of the mores defining women's participation in society. Thus as more liberal attitudes gained acceptance and modified the original concept of the "weaker sex," women gradually achieved social acceptance of their full participation in aquatic activities.

Bathing Costume

Bathing became popular as a medicinal treatment for both men and women of the new world in the last half of the 18th century. It was the only aquatic activity, however, that was considered proper for women until over a hundred years later.

Like so many other customs, changes in bathing costume styles were initially introduced by way of England. They were adapted or rejected according to the special conditions of this continent. To give a clearer picture of the costume worn in the colonies and in the United States, descriptions of the English dress will be included where pertinent. I have not, however, found any evidence showing that bathing nude was a practice for women in this country.

THE EARLY BATHING GOWN

It is disappointing but not surprising to discover the lack of descriptions pertaining to early bathing costume. This simple gown was utilitarian, not decorative. Thus it deserved little attention in the eyes of the contemporary bather.

No doubt it is due to the importance of the original owner that the following example has survived. In the collection of family memorabilia at Mount Vernon, there is a chemise-type bathing gown that is said to have been worn by Martha Washington (fig. 6). According to a note attached to the gown signed by Eliza Parke Custis, and addressed to "Rosebud," a pet name for her daughter, Martha Washington probably wore this bathing gown at Berkeley Springs as she accompanied her daughter, Patsy, in her bath.

This blue and white checked linen gown has several construction details similar to the chemise, a woman's undergarment, of the period. The sleeves were gathered near the shoulder and were set in with a gusset at the armpit. The skirt of the gown was made wider at the bottom by the usual method of adding four long triangular pieces—one to each side of both the front and back. The sleeves, however, are not as full as those one would expect to find on a chemise of the period. Also a chemise would probably have had a much wider neckline gathered by a draw-string threaded through a band at the neck edge. Instead, this bathing gown has a moderately low neckline made wider by a slit down the front which is closed by two linen tapes sewn to either edge of the front. Although less fabric was used for the bathing gown than was normally required to make a chemise, it was probably not because of functional considerations as one might like to think, but because of the scarcity of fabric. Close examination reveals that the triangular sections of fabric used to add fullness to the skirt consist of several pieces. In fact the two sections used in the back are made from a different fabric, although it is still a blue and white checked linen. Frugal use of scraps in linings and hidden sections of decorative costume was common practice in the 18th century. The piecing of the bathing gown is further evidence of the fact that it was a garment that had no ornamental purpose.

Figure 6.—Linen bathing gown said to have been worn by Martha Washington. (*Courtesy of The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.*)

Of particular interest are the lead disks which are wrapped in linen and attached near the hem next to the side seams by means of patches. No doubt these weights were used to keep the gown in place when the bather entered the water.

The following account of bathing in Dover, England, in 1782 suggests how the bathing gown might have been used at Berkeley Springs:

> The Ladies in a morning when they intend to bathe, put on a long flannel gown under their other clothes, walk down to the beach, undress themselves to the flannel, then they walk in as deep as they please, and lay hold of the guides' hands, three or four together sometimes.
>
> Then they dip over head twenty times perhaps; then they come onto the shore where there are women that attend with towels, cloaks, chairs, etc. The flannel is stripp'd off, wip'd dry, etc. Women hold cloaks round them. They dress themselves and go home.[27]

The earliest illustration showing costume worn in the United States for fresh water bathing is dated 1810 (see fig. 2). Unfortunately the painting reveals only that the bathing gowns were long and dark colored in comparison with the white dresses of the period.

An 1848 article which described, in detail, the fashionable dress called for by each activity at summer resorts, concludes with the following tantalizing paragraph:

> We have no space for an extended description of suitable bathing-dresses. They may be procured at any of our town establishments for the purpose. Much depends upon individual taste in their arrangement, for uncouth as they often of necessity are, they can be improved by a little tact.[28]

This is the only reference to American bathing costume of the second quarter of the 19th century that the author has found at this time. Nevertheless, an English source describes what must have been a transitional style between the chemise-type bathing gown and the more fitted costume of the 1850s.

The *Workwoman's Guide*, published in London, 1840, included instructions for making both a bathing gown and a bathing cap. Health and modesty were the main considerations that influenced the choice of color and type of material.

> Bathing gowns are made of blue or white flannel, stuff, calimanco, or blue linen. As it is especially desirable that the water should have free access to the person, and yet that the dress should not cling to, or weigh down the bather, stuff or calimanco are preferred to most other materials; the dark coloured gowns are the best for several reasons, but chiefly because they do not show the figure, and make the bather less conspicuous than she would be in a white dress.[29]

The following details reveal that, in general, this 1840 bathing gown starts as an unshaped garment similar to the gown attributed to Martha Washington [brackets are mine].

> As the width of the materials, of which a bathing gown is made, varies, it is impossible to say of how many breadths it should consist. The width at the bottom, when the gown is doubled, should be about 15 nails [1 nail = $2\frac{1}{4}$ in.]: fold it like a pinafore, slope $3\frac{1}{2}$ nails for the shoulders, cut or open slits of $3\frac{1}{2}$ nails long for the armholes, set in plain sleeves $4\frac{1}{2}$ nails long, $3\frac{1}{2}$ nails wide, and make a slit in front 5 nails long.[30]

The instructions for finishing this gown, however, show that the sleeves were worn close around the wrists and that the fullness of the skirt was secured at the waist by a belt.

> In making up, delicacy is the great object to be attended to. Hem the gown at the bottom, gather it into a band at the top, and run in strings; hem the opening and the bottom of the sleeves and put in strings. A broad band should be sewed in about half a yard from the top, to button round the waist.[31]

By the addition of the above details this type of bathing gown more closely approximates the style of the long-skirted blouse of the 1850s to be described later.

In regard to the bathing cap we are told that,

> These are made of oil-silk, and are worn, when bathing, by ladies who have long hair. . . . It is advisable, however, for those who have not long hair, to bathe in plain linen caps, so as to admit the water without the sand or grit, and thus the bather, unless prohibited on account of health, enjoys all the benefit of the shock without injuring the hair.[32]

The "Scene at Cape May" (fig. 3) shows women wearing long-skirted, long-sleeved, belted gowns as well as head coverings similar to the type described in *The Workwoman's Guide*.

Thus during the period when bathing became popular as a medicinal treatment, women wore loose, open gowns perhaps patterned after a common undergarment, the chemise. Although this chemise-type bathing costume must have been very comfortable when dry, its fullness was restrictive when wet. The bather could only immerse herself in water which was all that was necessary for the treatment. As the recreational possibilities of bathing began to over-

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[27] *Diary of John Crosier*, 1782, as quoted in C. Willett and Phillis Cunnington, *Handbook of English Costume in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), p. 401.

[28] Loc. cit. (footnote 19).

[29] A Lady, *The Workwoman's Guide* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1840), p. 61.

[30] Loc. cit. (footnote 29).

[31] Loc. cit. (footnote 29).

[32] Ibid., p. 68.

Figure 7.—Sea bathing at Coney Island, from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, September 1856. (Smithsonian photo 58437.)

shadow its health-giving properties, women's bathing dresses also became more fitted, following the general silhouette of women's fashions.

BIFURCATED BATHING DRESS

During the first half of the 19th century in England and the United States, a more tolerant attitude toward feminine exercise led women to abandon the fiction that they were not bipedal while bathing. This acknowledgment, however, was not fostered solely by the need for a more functional bathing dress. It was first evidenced by a few daring European women who wore lace-edged pantaloons trimmed with several rows of tucking under their daytime dresses. The shorter, untrimmed, knee-length drawers which quickly replaced the pantaloons, became an unseen but essential item in the fashionable English lady's toilette of the 1840s. These drawers, or a plainer version of the longer pantaloons, were adapted not only to the female riding habit but the bathing dress as well. An 1828 English source reported that "Many ladies when riding wear silk drawers similar to what is worn when bathing."[33] With the increased interest in physical exercise for women, ankle-length, open pantaloons also were being worn in the 1840s with a long overdress as an early form of gymnasium suit. This evidence of the early use of drawers suggests that, like English ladies, women in the United States were probably wearing a type of drawers beneath their nondescript bathing gowns during the second quarter of the 19th century. There is some slight support of

[33] As quoted in C. Willett and Phillis Cunnington, *The History of Underclothes* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), p. 130.

this theory in the following stanza of a poem that appeared in 1845:

> But go to the beach ere the morning be ended
> And look at the bathers—oh what an array!
> The ladies in trowsers, the *gemmen* in *blouses*
> E'en red flannel shirts are the "go" at Cape May.[34]

The rather crude but delightful sketch of sea-bathing at Coney Island in 1856 (fig. 7) shows the ladies wearing very full, ankle-length, trousers with a sack top extending loosely only a few inches below the waist. This type of bathing costume, which was primarily a bifurcated garment instead of a skirted one, became the prevailing fashion as reported in English women's magazines of the 1860s.

In contrast to the originally European skirtless costume, the Philadelphia publication, *Peterson's Magazine*, stated that bathing dress should consist of a pair of drawers and a long-skirted dress. The recommended drawers were full and confined at the ankle by a band that was finished with a ruffle. These drawers were attached to a "body" and fastened so that, even if the skirt washed up, the individual could not possibly be exposed. The dress was made by pleating or gathering the desired length of material onto a deep yoke with a separate belt securing the fullness at the waist. The bottom of the hem was about three inches above the ankle and was considered rather short. Loose shirt sleeves were drawn around the wrist by a band which was finished with a deep ruffle as a protection against the sun. According to this article many women wore a small talma or cape which hid the figure to some extent. It was recommended that the drawers, dress, and talma be made of the same woolen material.

> Bathing-dresses, although generally very unbecoming can be made to look very prettily with a little taste. If the dress is of a plain color, such as grey, blue or brown, a trimming around the talma, collar, yoke, ruffles etc. . . ., of crimson, green or scarlet, is a great addition.[35]

To complete a bathing toilette the following items were considered necessary: a pair of large lisle thread gloves, an oil cap to protect the hair from the water, a straw hat to shield the face from the sun, and gum overshoes for tender feet.

The red, tan, and blue-green checked bathing dress shown in figure 8 is jauntily trimmed with crimson braid edging the collar, belt, and wrist and ankle bands. This costume is a variation of the style described previously. The drawers, unlike those de-

Figure 8.—Bathing dress, c. 1855. (*Courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art.* Photograph by A. J. Wyatt, staff photographer.)

[34] "Cape May," *Godey's Lady's Book* (December 1845), vol. 31, p. 268.

[35] "Fashions for August, Bathing Dresses," *Peterson's Magazine* (August 1856), vol. 30, p. 145.

scribed in *Peterson's Magazine*, are sewn to a linen band with linen suspenders attached. The unfitted, unshaped skirt (8 ft. 8 in. in circumference) is pulled in at the waist by a belt attached to the center back. A similar technique for forming a waistline is described in *The Workwoman's Guide* of 1840.

Women's magazines in the United States from the third quarter of the 19th century show illustrations of bathing costume, but in many instances these publications used European fashion plates. *Harper's Bazar*, (spelled thus until 1929) particularly in its early years, used fashion plates and pattern supplements from its German predecessor *Der Bazar*. Thus, in one issue one can find a fashion plate showing the predominantly bifurcated European bathing suit and, in a column on New York fashions, a separate description of long-skirted bathing dresses with trousers. During the same period *Peterson's Magazine* had illustrations previously used in the London publication, *Queen's Magazine*.

American women seem to have accepted the majority of styles shown in European fashion plates, except for the skirtless bathing suits. The writer of an 1868 column on New York fashions sought to convince his readers to try the more daring European style although he grudgingly admitted that the "Bathing suits made with trousers and blouse waist without skirt are objected to by many ladies as masculine and fast. . . ." [36] This style was in fact, very similar to the costume worn by men when they bathed with the ladies. A year later, the writer of the same fashion column had given up the campaign to dress all women in the skirtless suits and admitted that these imports ". . . are worn by expert swimmers, who do not wish to be encumbered with bulky clothing." [37] Such practical bathing dress was thus limited to a very small number of progressive women.

The majority, consisting of those who were strictly bathers, wore the ankle-length drawers beneath a long dress as described or illustrated in the majority of sources that originated in the United States. Why was the European bathing suit not fully adopted by American women? Differences between the bathing customs of the two continents undoubtedly encouraged the development of different dress. While men and women in the United States bathed together freely at the seashore during the latter half of the 19th century, this practice was not widely accepted in England until the early 1900s. In the presence of men, American women probably felt compelled to retain their more concealing dress and drawers.

In England swimming seems to have been more popular among women than it was in the United States. While encouraging its readers to swim, during the late 1860s, *Queen's Magazine* used forceful language of a kind that was not found in American publications until the late 19th century. If swimming was more acceptable as a feminine exercise in England it is understandable why English women were more receptive to a functional, skirtless bathing suit—especially since it was worn only in the presence of other women.

In 1858, Winslow Homer, who was later to become a well-known American painter, was welcomed into the society at Newport until it became apparent that he wanted to sketch the bathers for a weekly newspaper (see fig. 4). So great were the ensuing objections that he was permitted to complete his sketches ". . . provided he depicted the bathers only in the water and only above the waistline and without divulging the identity of the bathers." [38]

As can be seen in figure 4, these sketches serve more as a testament of Homer's fancy than as an accurate historical statement on style. The two feminine legs exposed in the water from just below the knee to the toe and the feminine head coverings appear to be anachronisms. According to several other illustrations of the period, these women were undoubtedly wearing long drawers. The young artist at 22, however, has been described as having an eye for feminine beauty and a sense of fashion. He seems to have exploited to the full the decorative possibilities of hoop skirts blown by the breeze or agitated by some pretty accident to discreetly reveal a trim ankle. A drama of breeze versus long skirt appears with the small feminine figure in the left background of this print. The force of the waves and the motion of the frolicking bathers gave the artist opportunity to show two more pretty accidents. The only head covering he showed for feminine bathers was a ruffled cap that framed the face. Other sources show Newport bathers wearing the less attractive wide-brimmed straw hat (fig. 9). The straw headgear worn over these caps seems more likely since Newport's fashionable belles

[36] "New York Fashions," *Harper's Bazar* (August 8, 1868), vol. 1, no. 41, p. 643.

[37] Ibid. (July 10, 1869), vol. 2, no. 28, p. 435.

[38] B. Brooke, "Bathing-dress with Hat and Gloves," *Hobbies* (August 1958), vol. 63, p. 90.

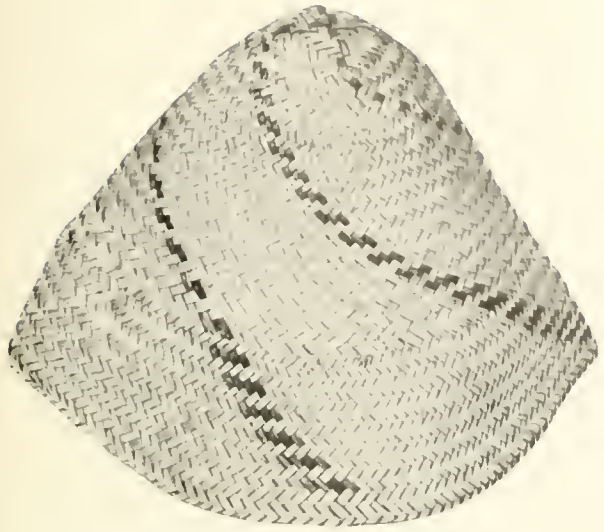

Figure 9.—Bathing hat of natural color and purple straw, c. 1880. (Smithsonian photo P 65409.)

would surely have sacrificed appearances and worn a straw hat to avoid an unfashionable sunburn and tan.

Nevertheless, Homer's sketch reflects characteristics seen in certain surviving examples from the 1860s namely that the top was becoming more fitted, being attached completely to a belt with the fuller skirt pleated or gathered to the bottom edge of the belt. In the Design Laboratory Collection of the Brooklyn Museum there is an 1860 black poplin specimen that may be a bathing dress. This example is trimmed at the shoulder seam with epaulets, an example of the extent to which fashion was finally playing a part in bathing costume.[39]

The dresses described above appear peculiar not only to 20th century eyes, but they also seem to have amused mid-19th century correspondents. One writer in 1857 declared that,

> We don't think a man could identify his own wife when she comes out of the bathing-house. A plump figure enters, surrounded with a multitude of rustly flounces and scarcely able to squeeze an enormous hoop through the door. She is absent a few minutes, and presto change! out comes a tall lank apparition, wrapped in the scanty folds of something that looks more like a superannuated night-gown than anything else, and a battered straw-chapeau knocked down over the eyes, and [illegible] towards the beach with the air and gait of a Tartar chieftain![40] [fig. 10.]

Another writer felt that he

> . . . must say—even in the columns of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated*—that they don't look very picturesque or pretty when *a la Naiade*. . . . Rather limp, sacks tied in the middle, eel-bottles, hydropathic coalheavers and "long-shoremen," and preternaturally dilapidated Bloomers, would appear to be the ideals aimed at.[41] [fig. 11.]

This use of the term "Bloomers," referring to long full drawers or trousers, is a reminder of how similar the 1855 bathing gown with drawers (see fig. 8) was to the reform dress introduced in 1848 and worn by Amelia Bloomer, the feminist, in 1852.

Despite the evident use of a new waistline treatment, the most popular bathing costume of the 1870s, according to *Harper's Bazar*, continued to feature the yoke blouse that reached at least to the knee. This combination of blouse and skirt was held in position at the waist by a belt. The high neck was finished with a sailor collar or a standing pleated frill, while the long sleeves and full Turkish trousers, buttoned on the side of the ankle, concealed the limbs. In 1873 a column on New York fashions reported an effort to popularize short-sleeved, low-throated suits then in favor at European bathing places and which had been illustrated in the *Bazar*. Nevertheless, the writer hedged this report by adding that

> It is thought best, however, to provide an extra pair of long sleeves that may be buttoned on or basted in the short puffs that are sewn in the arm holes. Sometimes a small cape fastening closely about the throat is also added.[42]

Nevertheless, sketches of bathing scenes from the seventies indicate that some American women wore even shorter sleeves and trousers than those prescribed by the fashion magazines.

Linen and wool fabrics were both suggested in the 1840s, but by the 1870s flannel was most frequently used for bathing dresses, with serge also being recommended. Navy blue, and to a lesser extent, white, gray, scarlet, and brown were popular colors in

[39] Photograph and pattern appears in Blanche Payne, *History of Costume* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 518, 583–584.

[40] "An Excursion to Long Branch," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (August 22, 1857), vol. 4, no. 90, p. 182.

[41] Loc. cit. (footnote 18).

[42] "New York Fashions," *Harper's Bazar* (July [illegible]), vol. 6, no. 29, p. 451.

Figure 10.—"How she went in," from *Harper's Bazar*, August 1870. (Smithsonian photo 61585A.)

cheeks as well as solid colors trimmed with white, red, gray, or blue worsted braid.

Bathing mantles or cloaks were worn to conceal the moist figure when crossing the beach. These garments were made of Turkish toweling with wide sleeves and hoods, and were so long as "to barely escape" the ground.

In 1873 one good bathing cap was described as an oiled silk bag-crown cap large enough to hold the hair loosely. The frill around the edge was bound with colored braid. Many ladies preferred, however, to let their hair hang loose and under a wide-brimmed hat of coarse straw tied down on the sides to protect their skin from the sun (fig. 9).

Bathing shoes or slippers were generally worn when the shore was rough and uneven. In 1871 manila sandals were worn, but the most functional bathing shoes are said to have been high buskins of thick unbleached cotton duck with cork soles. They were secured with checked worsted braid. Two years later there were bathing shoes of white duck or sail canvas with manila soles. Slippers for walking in the sand were "mules" or merely toes and soles made of flannel, braided to match the cloak, and sewn to cork soles.

Throughout this period the social aspect of bathing predominated over the therapeutic goals and women were making a greater effort to transform their bathing garments into attractive and functional outfits. Motivated by the presence of men at the seashore and by the competition with other women for masculine attention, ladies were more concerned with the style of their bathing dresses and appropriate trimmings. Thus bathing costume joined the ranks of other fashions described in women's magazines.

Now that women were frolicking in the water rather than simply being dunked several times, their costume became somewhat more functional. Long trousers gave them greater freedom in the water although the skirts which continued to be worn,

Figure 11.—"How she came out," from *Harper's Bazar*, August 1870. (Smithsonian photo 61585B.)

Figure 12.—Bathing costumes from a supplement to *The Tailor's Review*, July 1895. (*Courtesy of Library of Congress.*)

tended to negate this improvement. Even as early as the 1870s there were efforts to shorten sleeves and eliminate high necklines. This trend to make bathing dress more practical increased in momentum toward the end of the century.

PRINCESS STYLE BATHING DRESS

Although attitudes toward sports were more enlightened by the 1880s, many women continued to wear the old bathing dress with its belted blouse extending to a long skirt and a pair of trousers. As an alternate to this garb, the "princess style" was developed with the blouse and trousers cut in one piece or else sewn permanently to the same belt. A separate skirt extending below the knee was buttoned at the waist to conceal the figure. This new style in bathing costume was probably derived from an innovation in women's underwear. During the late 1870s a new style of undergarment, the "combination" of chemise and drawers, had come into use. Petticoats could be fastened to buttons sewn around the waist of the combination. This streamlining of undergarments helped the lady of fashion to maintain a desirably svelte figure. Apparently the advantages of this streamlining were obvious, because it was not long before women were quietly adapting this style to bathing dresses. By the 1890s the skirt was often omitted for swimming (fig. 12), giving the more active women more freedom in the water. Following popular dress styles, the top of the bathing costume was bloused over the belt. The sailor collar, either large or small, was a great favorite, but a straight standing collar with rows of white braid was also worn.

The "princess style" was not the only innovation available in bathing dress. *Harper's Bazar* reported in 1881 that imported French bathing suits [4] for ladies

[4] The term "bathing suit" as opposed to "bathing dress" came into use in the last quarter of the 19th century when the bifurcated bathing garment with a shorter skirt was accepted. The two terms, however, continued interchangeably, with "bathing dress" appearing

were made without sleeves, since any covering on the arm interfered with the freedom desirable for swimming. Nevertheless, according to other contemporary fashion descriptions, American bathing suits retained their long sleeves until the early 1880s when the foreign fashion of short sleeves came to the United States. In 1885 it was reported that

> The sleeves may be the merest 'caps' four or five inches deep under the arm, curved narrow toward the top, and lapped there or they may be half-long and straight, reaching to the elbows, or else they may be the regular coat sleeves covering the arms to the wrist. With the short sleeves it is customary to add the sleeves cut from a gauze vest to give the arm some protection from the sun.[44]

Sleeves were pushed up in 1890 and puffed high about the shoulders by means of elastic tape in the hem. By 1893 fashion reports acknowledged that sleeve length was a matter of individual choice.

Despite this neat resolution of the diminishing sleeve, contemporary sketches of bathing scenes indicate that some women in the United States were wearing the shorter sleeves even earlier.

Short full trousers, reaching just below the knee, accompanied by knee-length skirts—sometimes worn even shorter—succeeded the long Turkish trousers and ankle-length skirt. As the trousers diminished in length, long stockings or bathing shoes with long stocking tops became a necessary part of the bathing costume to cover the lower limbs, particularly in mixed bathing (see fig. 1). The stockings, which were cotton or wool, plain or fancy, and of any color or combination of colors in keeping with the costume, were worn with a variety of bathing shoes, sandals, or slippers when bathing off a rocky shore. Foot coverings were usually made of white canvas; the slippers were held on by a spiral arrangement of braid or ribbon about the ankles, while the laced shoes were often made with heavy cork soles. A gaiter shoe or combination shoe and stocking was made of waterproof cloth, laced up the sides, and reached to about the knees. Low rubber shoes were also worn.

Bathing caps of waxed linen or oiled silk were used to protect the hair. They had whale bone in the brim and could be adjusted by drawstrings in the back. Blue, white, or ecru rubber hats were also used. These caps had large full crowns—which held in all the hair—and wired brims. A wide-brimmed rough straw hat, tied on with a strip of trimming braid or with ribbon, was sometimes worn as protection against the sun (fig. 9).

Bathing mantles like those of the 1870s were still being worn by the late 19th century and these were frequently trimmed with colored braid. Cotton tapes sewn in parallel rows, mohair braid, or strips of flannel were still being used to make the bathing dress more attractive.

Navy blue and white, as well as ecru, maroon, gray, and olive were popular colors for the bathing dress. In 1890 the writer of a fashion column thought it pertinent to add that ". . . black bathing suits are worn as a matter of choice, not merely by those dressing in mourning." [45] Apparently the wearing of black no longer had this exclusive significance when bathing, but prior to 1890 it did.

As women became more active in the water and were learning to swim they began to accept more practical changes in bathing costume. Not only the style, as described previously, but also the fabric was considered for its functional characteristics. Flannel was still widely used but was being replaced by serge which was not as heavy when wet. Another indication of this trend was that stockinet, a knitted material, was gaining in popularity at the end of the century.

The "princess style" of the early 1890s combined the drawers and bodice in one garment: the separate skirt fell just short of the ends of the drawers which covered the knees. By the mid-1890s, however, the drawers which were now called knickerbockers, were shortened so as to be completely covered by the knee-length skirt. These knickerbockers were either attached to the waist in the popular "princess style" or they were fastened to the waist by a series of flat bone buttons.

During this same period, the mid-1890s, knitted, cotton tights were sometimes worn in place of knickerbockers. Bathing tights differed from the knickerbockers in that they were hemmed rather than gathered on an elastic band at the lower edge and that they were not attached to the waist. When tights were used they were completely concealed by a one-piece, knee-length bathing dress. The use of the more streamlined bathing tights was another step toward more functional bathing costume. Despite these improvements, most women continued to wear stockings, usually black, when they

[44] "New York Fashions," *Harper's Bazar* (July 4, 1885), vol. 18, no. 27, p. 427.

[45] Ibid. (July 5, 1890), vol. 23, no. 27, p. 523.

Figure 13.—Bathing dress of black "mohair," c. 1900. (Smithsonian photo 60383.)

bathed or swam in public. The dictates of fashion and standards of modesty continued to conflict with practical considerations.

As with street dress, corsets seem to have been an important though unseen bathing article necessary for maintaining smart posture. In 1896 it was reported that

> Unless a woman is very slender, bathing corsets should be worn. If they are not laced tightly they are a help instead of a hindrance to swimming, and some support is needed for a figure that is accustomed to wearing stays.[46]

While describing the bathing dresses available in 1910 an article noted: "Some of these are made up with . . . princess forms that are boned so as to do away with the bathing corset." [47]

The bodice of the bathing costume continued to be bloused, but by 1905 it was modified to be merely loose. An article appearing in 1896 noted that bathing suits should be cut high in the neck, not tight around the throat, but close enough to prevent burning by the sun. The sailor collar continued to be used during the late 1890s but became less fashionable shortly after the turn of the century. Nevertheless there had to be some white around the neck for the bathing dress to be considered smart. The puffed sleeves, which had become popular in the late 1890s were modified in breadth and length to allow free use of the muscles in swimming (fig. 13).

In 1897 fashion magazines were suggesting that skirts of bathing dresses looked best when the front breadth was shaped narrower toward the belt, while by 1902 the skirts were fitted over the hips in order to delineate the figure. In 1905 pleated skirts again became fashionable, although flared skirts were still acceptable.

Dark blue and black were the popular colors, although white, red, gray, and green were also used. Flannel was no longer recommended for bathing dress; serge and "mohair"--a fabric with a cotton warp and a mohair or alpaca weft were widely used. The impractical bathing dress of silk fabric was worn by those who could afford this extravagance; thus, the conspicuous consumption of the "leisure class" was even found at the beaches.

Bathing hats were still being worn but it was considered more fashionable to wear a rubber or oil silk cap covered with a bright silk turban when there was a surf. For the bather who seldom ventured very far into the water the most fashionable practice was to have no covering at all.

Throughout the 19th century bathing costume followed an impelling course toward becoming more functional. As the popularity of recreational bathing and then swimming for women increased, the number of yards of fabric required to make a bathing dress decreased. Nevertheless, by the 1900s, many women knew how to swim, but the majority were still bathers. Thus bathing suits continued in use through the first quarter of the 20th century.

[46] Ibid. (June 13, 1896), vol. 29, no. 24, p. 503.

[47] Ibid. (July 1910), vol. 43, no. 7, p. [illegible].

Swimming Costume

Bathing costume did not evolve gracefully into the swim suit, nor was there an abrupt replacement of one garment for the other. Instead, a garb designed for swimming emerged in the 19th century as tentatively and as poorly received as had the suggestion that women should be active in the water. The growing popularity of swimming and the changing status of women eventually made it possible for the swimming suit to replace the bathing suit in the 1920s. By the 1930s, however, this trend was accelerated by a growing advertising and ready-to-wear clothing industry. Thus a history of the swimming costume tends to divide itself into two sections: early swimming suits and the influence of the swim suit industry.

EARLY SWIMMING SUITS

The earliest reference to swimming costume I have found was in 1869. At this date swimming in the United States was considered a masculine skill, exercise, and recreation; only men were provided with a real opportunity to swim at popular watering places. As described previously, *Harper's Bazar* reported that American women in general rejected the European bathing suit made with long trousers and a skirtless waist. Nevertheless, this costume was ". . . worn by expert swimmers, who do not wish to be encumbered with bulky clothing."[48]

In the 1870s the rare descriptions of this more functional garment—called "swimming suit" even at this early date—were limited to a sentence or two buried within long columns of fine print describing popular bathing apparel. One mentions a ". . . single knitted worsted garment, fitting the figure, with waist and trousers in one."[49] Another was made without sleeves as "one garment, the blouse and trousers being cut all in one, like the sleeping garments worn by small children."[50] These more practical bifurcated garments probably derived from the European suit of the 1860s that had been rejected by the majority of American women. For example, an English source reported that in 1866 the following garment was worn: ". . . Swimming Costume, a body and trousers cut in one, secures perfect liberty of action and does not expose the figure."[51]

The descriptions of American swimming suits, however brief, offered evidence that the pastime was growing in popularity with women. Generally speaking, 19th century women's magazines were mere disseminators of fine and decorous ideas and practices for well-mannered ladies; their editors were not innovators. With such an editorial policy it is understandable that these magazines would not, as a rule, publicize trends of popular origin until they were fairly well established. The skirtless swimming suit of the 1870s was no doubt more common in the United States than its meager description in *Harper's Bazar* would seem to indicate.

As long as feminine swimming was not generally accepted, however, efforts to develop practical swimming suits remained isolated owing to the lack of communication between manufacturer and consumer and to traditional attitudes. Feminine interest in swimming and physical activities threatened belief in the "weaker-sex" that contributed to maintaining the traditional masculine and feminine roles; efforts to develop functional swimming dress also attacked established standards of feminine modesty. These challenges to the status quo were met with the weapon of the complacent majority—silence. Consequently, from the third quarter of the 19th century, when we find the first reference to a specialized garment for swimming in the United States, writings on swimming costume appeared infrequently until the 1920s.

In 1886 two "ladies' bathing jerseys" and two bathing suits of the traditional type appeared in the *First Illustrated Catalogue of Knitted Bathing Suits* of J. J. Pfister Company in San Francisco. The captions over the illustrations leave no question that the briefer bathing jerseys were intended for swimming while the others were for bathing. These jerseys—form-fitting tunics that were mid-thigh in length—were made with high necks and cap sleeves. Underneath this garment women wore trunks that extended to the knee and stockings; there was also the alternate choice of tights, a combination of trunks and stockings. To complete the outfit the feminine reader was encouraged to buy a knitted skull cap.

Apparently these bathing jerseys were successful; three, instead of two, jerseys appeared in the same

[48] "New York Fashions," *Harper's Bazar* (July 10, 1869), vol. 2, no. 28, p. 435.

[49] Ibid. (July 13, 1872), vol. 5, no. 28, p. 459.

[50] Ibid. (July 25, 1874), vol. 7, no. 30, p. 475.

[51] As quoted in C. Willett Cunnington, *English Women's Clothing in the 19th Century* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1958), p. 225.

catalog in 1890. It is obvious from this later catalog, however, that there was a greater demand for bathing dresses since twelve designs of the skirted costume were featured as opposed to the two dresses in the first issue.

Even by the early 20th century it is difficult to find specific references to a swimming suit in women's magazines, only occasionally does a concern with swimming obtrude into the traditional descriptions of bathing dress. In *The Woman's Book of Sports*, however, J. Parmly Paret was specific about the requirements for a suitable swimming costume in 1901.

> It is particularly important that nothing tight should be worn while swimming, no matter how fashionable a dress may be for bathing. The exercise requires the greatest freedom, and a swimming costume should never include corsets, tight sleeves, or a skirt below the knees. The freedom of the shoulders is the most important of all, but anything tight around the body interferes with the breathing and the muscles of the back, while a long skirt—even one a few inches below the knees—binds the legs constantly in making their strokes.[52]

Although this costume (fig. 14) more closely resembles the traditional bathing dress than the jersey described previously, this discussion illustrates the growing dichotomy between bathing dress and swimming dress and between fashionable styles and functional styles.

Photographs of East coast beach scenes in 1903 show a few women wearing costumes different from the black or navy blue bathing dress worn by the majority. These independent spirits seem to be wearing close-fitting knitted trunks that cover the knees or, when with stockings, come within an inch or two above the knee. Above these trunks they appear to be wearing knitted one-piece tunics or belted blouses that cover the hips. This costume, sleeveless or short-sleeved, and with a simplified neckline, must have been the functional suit of its day.

An important impetus was given to the development of the swimming suit with the entrance of women into swimming as a competitive sport. On September 5, 1909, Adeline Trapp wore a one-piece knitted swimming suit when she became the first woman to swim across the East River in New York, through the treacherous waters of Hell Gate. Both the swimming suit and the swim were part of a campaign devised by Wilbert Longfellow of the U.S. Volunteer Life Saving Corps to encourage women to learn to swim.

Adeline Trapp was a summer employee of the Life Saving Corps in 1909. Mr. Longfellow saw in the 20-year-old Brooklyn school teacher a respectable young woman who could be a source of publicity. He ordered her to get a one-piece swimming suit for the swim. As early as 1899 in England, a woman

Figure 14.—The recommended costume for swimming from J. Parmly Paret, *The Woman's Book of Sports*, 1901. (Smithsonian photo 58436.)

52 J. Parmly Paret, *The Woman's Book of Sports*, New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1901), p. 74.

participating in competitions organized by the Amateur Swimming Association could have worn a one-piece, skirtless, knitted costume with a shaped sleeve at least three inches long, a slightly scooped neck, and legs that extended to within three inches of the knee. Mr. Longfellow may have had this English suit in mind. He might have known of similar suits in the United States or he might have simply wanted to free Adeline of yards of fabric to make her more competitive with male swimmers. Nevertheless, Adeline Trapp did not know that the English suits existed, nor did she know where she could find one. She spent many hours going from one American manufacturer to another trying on men's knitted suits. She found that they were all cut too low at the neck and armholes and did not cover enough of the legs to preclude criticism. At this point a friend who worked for a stocking manufacturer offered to get her a suitable costume from England. This costume, a knitted, gray cotton suit—whether originally for a man or woman in England is not known—was the one Adeline wore when she swam Hell Gate.

Although more than thirty men attempted the swim, the fact that a woman accomplished the feat made newspaper headlines. Following this event, Miss Trapp received a terse letter from the Brooklyn School Board stating that they thought it improper for an educator of Brooklyn children to appear in public so scantily dressed in a one-piece swimming costume. For her future swims Adeline Trapp was careful to have someone carry a blanket to throw over her as she emerged from the water.[53]

In 1910, Annette Kellerman arrived in the United States from Australia by way of England. For her fancy diving exhibitions she wore sleeveless one-piece knitted swimming tights that covered her from neck to toe—a costume she had probably adopted in England.

The decade from 1910 to 1920 was a crucial period in the history of bathing and swimming costume. Popular attitudes were changing in favor of the woman who swam but, as frequently occurs in social reforms, there was a cultural lag between public opinion and the policies of institutions. The Red Cross, which began its excellent water safety program in 1914, taught women to swim but did not admit women as Life Saving Corps members until 1920. Symbolic of the conflict between old and new attitudes were the relative roles of bathing and swimming costume during this period. As Annette Kellerman described them:

> There are two kinds . . . those that are adapted for use in water, and those that are unfit for use except on dry land. If you are going to swim, wear a water bathingsuit. But if you are merely going to play on the beach, and pose for the camera fiends, you may safely wear the dry land variety. . . . I am certain that there isn't a single reason under the sun why everybody should not wear lightweight suits. Anyone who persuades you to wear the heavy skirty kind is endangering your life.[54]

Chic women's magazines, however, were still reluctant to admit in their fashion pages that a more utilitarian costume existed. The June 1, 1917 issue of *Vogue* reported that there were two kinds of bathing suits: a loose straight suit and those on surplice lines, ". . . which hold their place by virtue of being so very becoming." [55]

The most popular of these, the surplice, was not a novelty of the season but a continuation of 19th century bathing suit styles. Fashion illustrations show that the hemline of the skirt was approaching the middle of the knee, with the bloomers remaining hidden. There was also a revival of the style that permitted the bloomers to show several inches below the skirt. In this case the bloomers reached the knee and the skirt was several inches shorter. Both versions were shown with short sleeves or cap sleeves, or sleeveless; "V" necklines with collars and square necklines were widely used. The more fashionable creations were made of silk taffeta or "surf satin," while the majority were made of "mohair," wool jersey, worsted, or closely woven cotton. Black and navy blue were unquestionably the favorite colors.

The loose straight suit, which evidently gained its inspiration from the chemise frock of the period, had no waistline and hung straight from the shoulders (fig. 15); a belt or sash was frequently looped below the natural waistline on the hips. The chemise type of bathing suit differed from the surplice only in having no fitted waist and requiring less fabric.

In the June 15, 1917 issue, *Vogue* modified its position of two weeks earlier to acknowledge that there was a third style of costume worn in the water. Again, the descriptions of the surplice and chemise-type bathing suits were accompanied by numerous

[53] Telephone interview with Adeline Trapp Mulhenberg, May 1966.

[54] Annette Kellerman, *How to Swim* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), p. 47.

[55] *Vogue* (June 1, 1917), vol. 49, no. 11, p. 85.

illustrations. No drawings, however, were published to show the knitted jersey suit that was described as ". . . usually sleeveless, quite short and fairly straight . . ." and ". . . intended for the woman who swims expertly." [56]

Figure 15.—Black silk bathing dress, 1923. (Smithsonian photo P-65412.)

As late as the early 1920s, the fashion pages of *Harper's Bazar* and *Vogue* were concentrated on the bathing suits, aiming at readers involved in the social life of the seaside resorts lounging about the beach with occasional splashing in the water. The growing numbers of women who wanted swimming suits, however, had only to turn to the advertising sections of these same magazines to find that even in 1915 such shops as Bonwit Teller & Co. and B. Altman & Co. were advertising knitted swimming suits.

In June 1916, *Delineator* solved the dilemma of bathing versus swimming costume in an intriguing article written to sell a pattern for a bathing costume. In description and presentation of illustrations, the article emphasized a costume with "all the features essential to a practical swimming-suit." [57] The blouse and bloomers were attached at the waist in this garment which had a square neckline and no skirt or sleeves. Made up in wool jersey, this would have been a practical swimming costume for the period. But this was not the only style available from this one pattern. The following variations were included: a sailor collar on a "V" neckline; a high-standing collar, long sleeves; and a detachable skirt with the fullness either pleated or gathered into a waistband, to be worn long to the knees or just short enough to show several inches of the bloomer. In this way *Delineator* succeeded in satisfying nearly every degree of conservatism an amazing accomplishment.

The spring edition of *Sears, Roebuck and Co. Catalog* for 1916 offered a one-piece, or "California-style," knitted worsted bathing suit with the underpiece sewn to a skirt. This costume was less elaborate than the other dresses shown, although it was still knee length. The 1918 spring catalog showed two one-piece knitted outfits suitable for swimming in striking contrast to the surplice bathing dresses that were also offered. By 1920 all of the bathing costumes illustrated in the *Sears, Roebuck and Co. Catalog* were of the more abbreviated and functional type.

In 1918 Annette Kellerman recommended that serious swimmers wear close-fitting swimming tights or the two-piece suits commonly worn by men. Being

[56] Ibid. (June 15, 1917), vol. 49, no. 12, p. 67.

[57] "For the Modern Mermaid," *Delineator* (June [illegible]), vol. 88, no. 6, p. 52.

quick to admit that this costume would not be tolerated at all beaches, she told dedicated swimmers to

> . . . get one-piece tights anyway and wear over the tights the lightest garment you can get. It should be a loose sleeveless garment hung from the shoulders. Never have a tight waist band. It is a hindrance. Also on beaches where stockings are enforced your one-piece undergarment should have feet, so that the separate stocking and its attendant garter is abolished.[58]

Figure 16.—One-piece swimming suit of knitted wool, c. 1918. (Smithsonian photo P-65413.)

Knitted swimming suits found in advertisements of the period were either one-piece or two-piece; the trunks were attached or separate, but they always extended a few inches below the brief skirt. Although this costume could be considered sleeveless, in some examples the suit was built up under the arm—a concession to the demands of modesty (fig. 16). The scooped or "V" neckline with no collar was relatively high; in order to put on or remove the suit it was unbuttoned at one shoulder.

It was this type of swimming costume which evolved into the garment that dominated the fashion pages of the mid-1920s.

Changes in costume brought about by the acceptance of swimming also affected leg covering. By 1920 fashion pages showed stockings that reached only to the calf and many advertisements for the abbreviated knitted bathing suits presented the lower leg covered with only the high laced bathing shoe (fig. 17) or, in a few cases, bare. Bathing slippers were black satin or black or white canvas held on the feet by ribbon crisscrossed up the leg to tie at mid-calf. Shoes were of satin or canvas, laced in the front to mid-calf.

There was a wide variety of colorful rubber caps; some were gathered on a band or with a ruffle while others were closely fitted with brims. Also popular was a close-fitting rubber cap with a colorful scarf tied around it; swimmers did without the scarf.

Despite the distinction between the two types of bathing apparel, the beach cloak continued to be used by both the serious swimmer and those who stayed safely in the shallows. Some bathing wraps had large collars and were only mid-calf in length. Colorful beach hats, beach parasols, bags, and blankets were used, particularly by the bather who seldom got wet.

The acceptance of swimming as a feminine activity provided an impetus for the use of the knitted swimming suit; but standards of modesty had to change before this suit could gain wide acceptance. Bathing dresses of the 19th century had been designed to cover, conceal, and obscure not only the torso but the limbs as well. The swimming suit that was gaining acceptance in the early 1920s not only revealed the arms and a good part of the legs, but actually dared to follow the lines of the torso. Contemporary descriptions, that seem amusingly cautious today, included such statements as ". . . all Annette Kellerman Bathing Attire is distinguished by an incomparable, daring beauty of fit that always remains refined." [59] Even less cautious was a statement that these bathing suits were "famous . . . for their perfect fit and exquisite, plastic beauty of line." [60]

The growing numbers of women who wore the new styles of bathing dress were a cause of concern to

[58] Loc. cit. (footnote 54).

[59] *Harper's Bazar* (June 1920), vol. 55, no. 6, p. 138.

[60] Ibid. (June 1921), 54th year, no. 2504, p. 101.

self-appointed guardians of decency. In 1917 the convention of the American Association of Park Superintendents at New Orleans adopted a series of bathing regulations for city beaches which dealt with the problems of the changing bathing suit. In general these regulations specified that ". . . No all-white or flesh-colored suits are permitted or suits that expose the chest lower than a line drawn on a level with the arm pits." [61] In regard to ladies' bathing suits these men agreed that

> Blouse and bloomer suits may be worn with or without stockings, provided the blouse has quarter-arm sleeves or close-fitting arm holes, and provided the bloomers are full and not shorter than four inches above the knee.[62]

Regulations for knitted suits were similar, with the added caution that the skirt hem could be no more than two inches above the lower edge of the trunks. As late as 1923 these regulations were in effect at public beaches in Cleveland and Chicago.

By 1923 a permanent change was occurring in the design of beach apparel. The chemise-style bathing dress of black taffeta or satin still appeared in the fashion magazines (fig. 15), but by 1929 it had disappeared. The result of the struggle between the fancy bathing suit and the plain knitted suit became obvious even in the popular magazines of the period. In the opening paragraphs of a short story, Shirley, the villainess, donned a smart bathing suit of puffy black taffeta, with a patent-leather belt and a scarlet scarf, and baked in the shadow of a big umbrella. Margaret, the heroine, in a plain knitted suit and black cap was intent only upon diving, plunging, and splashing for her own enjoyment. In another story a young lady, who came out of the sea wearing a ". . . bathing suit so scanty it seemed a mere gesture flung carelessly to the proprieties . . ." described herself as a modern young woman.[63]

In the early twenties advertisements capitalized on the functional characteristics of swimming suits. A 1923 advertisement declared:

> No! No! Not a bathing suit! No! The Wil Wite is a swimming suit. The difference is great—very great. A bathing suit is something in which to "Sun" oneself and wear on the beach. A swimming suit is a garment made expressly for those who swim. It is free from frills and furbelows. It follows the form with the same sincerity that a neat silk stocking clings to a trim ankle. It fits when dry or wet . . . it is a real swimming suit.[64]

The knitted swimming suit which achieved dominance over the bathing suit in the 1920s was similar to its earlier version except that both the armhole and the neckline were lower. This made it possible to put on the suit without unbuttoning one of the straps at the shoulder—a feature that was omitted in this newer style. Sometimes a sash was looped loosely around the waist; a geometrically shaped monogram provided a smart decoration. The affluent swimmer could distinguish herself from the masses by wearing silk jersey. During the last half of this decade women coquettishly adopted a man's swimming suit, consisting of a striped sleeveless jersey shirt with dark colored trunks and a white belt.

Figure 17.—Bathing shoes, 1910. (Smithsonian photo P 65417.)

Perhaps the last stand for the bathing dress was the appearance of the "dressmaker suit" toward the end of the 1920s and on into the early 1930s. The neck and shoulder line copied those of currently fashionable evening dresses, with a parallel treatment of the skirt, which was shortened to end just below the hips. This suit was worn by women reluctant to brave the revealingly unadorned but popular swimming suit.

A depilatory advertisement took advantage of the increasing "stockingless vogue" and explained that "Women who love swimming for the sake of the sport, find stockings a great hindrance to their enjoyment."[65]

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[61] "Bathing Regulations for City Beaches," *American City* (May 1917), vol. 16, no. 5, p. 537.

[62] Loc. cit. (footnote 61).

[63] Jane Pride, "Pick-up," *Delineator* (May 1927), vol. 110, no. 5, p. 15.

[64] *Harper's Bazar* (June 1923), 56th year, no. 2528, p.

[65] *Delineator* (June 1923), vol. 102, no. 6, p. 90.

By the end of the twenties, the stocking for bathing and swimming had become an article of the past.

Although women were accepted in athletics and had achieved a generally wider role in public life, white, untanned skin was still the ideal in the 1920s. Thus sunproof creams, beach coats, and beach umbrellas were still important.

According to the well-known "trickle-down" theory of fashion, styles of dress first become fashionable among the socially elite and wealthy and are then, in time, emulated by those at lower socioeconomic levels. The knitted swimming suit, however, entered the fashion pages by a different route. It had its insignificant start with the skirtless bifurcated garments of the late 1860s. Going against popular opinion, some women did swim. They violated prevalent standards of modesty by continuing to wear a functional suit. Gradually the demand grew. A plain, utilitarian garment was needed; pressure increased. Thus, by the 1920s the swimming suit prevailed, complimenting the image of the newly emancipated "modern woman."

SWIM SUIT INDUSTRY

Along with the increased popularity of swimming and the appearance of the knitted swimming suit we note the rapid development of the ready-to-wear swim suit industry. During the last half of the 19th century women frequently made their own bathing dresses with the aid of paper pattern supplements that appeared in women's magazines of the period. Dressmakers also may have used these patterns to outfit their clients for their summer excursions. On the other hand, ladies in the large cities could purchase bathing dresses at furnishing stores or rent them at the large public beaches. A small advertisement in *Harper's Bazar*, August 9, 1873, announced that in addition to gauze undershirts, linen drawers, collars and cuffs, Union Adams & Co. of New York had bathing dresses for sale. The notice is noteworthy when one considers that the ready-to-wear clothing industry and the field of advertising were in their infancy.

With the increased popularity of the knitted suit, knitting mills included men's and women's swimming apparel in their more prosaic lines of underwear and sweaters. Many companies advertised the new product, steadily increasing their range until the inevitable occurred. In 1921 a national advertising campaign for swimming suits was initiated by Jantzen, a hitherto obscure knitting mill whose production had been limited to sweaters, woolen hosiery, and jackets for Chinese workmen. Capitalizing on the growing interest in swimming, Jantzen prominently advertised swimming suits instead of bathing dresses. The retail stores selling these suits advertised locally, but national advertising became the domain of the manufacturers, educating the public to associate certain positive qualities with their names.

To the delight of the swim suit industry, swimming was more than a passing vogue. In 1934, a National Recreation Association study on the use of leisure time found that among ninety-four free-time activities swimming was second only to movies in popularity.[66] Although the number of swimmers was increasing, competition caused the swim suit industry to take a new approach. Manufacturers attempted to increase the volume of sales through advertising by emphasizing style. In 1927 one company advertised a national appeal to woman's vanity by declaring that beach *uniforms* were out and that beach *styles* were in.

It was a general characteristic of the 1930s that swimming suits covered less of the bather. The attached trunks of the swimming suit no longer extended down the leg but it survived unseen beneath the vestigial remains of a skirt.

The diminishing coverage of the swim suit was also related to a changing attitude toward sun exposure. For years women had protected their delicate skin to prevent any unladylike, healthy appearance. The barrier against a lady having a tan deteriorated as women became accepted into athletic activities. By 1930, women eagerly sought a sun tan. Not only were there lotions to help the neophyte sun-worshiper acquire a rich even tan, but creams were available for the impatient who wished an instant tan. In line with this trend, swim suit manufacturers and sellers promoted and sold low sun-back or California styles, halter necks, and cut-out sections that exposed various portions of the midriff. The favorite suit, however, was the form-fitting maillot of wool jersey with no skirt.

In the early 1930s, the textile trade journals applauded the increasing stress on styling as a means of encouraging the consumer to buy a new suit rather than to use "last year's." Stylishness was

[66] *The Leisure Hours of 5,000 People; a Report of a Study of Leisure Time Activities and Desires* (New York, National Recreation Assoc., 1934).

Figure 18.—One-piece swimming suits of knitted wool, 1930. (*Courtesy of Cole of California.*)

introduced into knitted suits through the use of a greater range of solid colors. Parti-colored suits, with stripes and slashes of a second or even a third color, were also featured (fig. 18). Knitting mills were pressed to introduce novelty effects such as mesh, waffle motifs, and lace patterns in knitted fabrics.

The insistent emphasis on novelty encouraged the development of such items as all-rubber swimming suits with embossed surfaces simulating knitted textiles. Although this innovation was not successful, because the suits were clammy and easily torn, rubber did find a definite use in swimming suits with the introduction of Lastex—a yarn made with a core of rubber wrapped by a fine thread of another fiber. The following advertisement for swimming suits made with Lastex best explains why this important innovation is still valued by the industry today:

> There's no wrinkle, no bag, no sag, even under the most ruthless sun! No other human device can even approximate that utter freedom, that perfection of fit, at rest or in motion, that airy but strictly legal sense of wearing nothing at all. There is no substitute for this elastic yarn, which imparts lasting elasticity to any fabric.[67]

[67] *Harper's Bazaar* (June 1934), 68th year, no. 2660, p. 9.

Having exhausted the novelty effects of knitted swim suits, women in the late 1930s began to respond eagerly to the wide range of decorative possibilities found in woven fabrics. Cotton and the relatively new man-made fibers such as Celanese acetate and Dupont rayon were used in fabrics such as ginghams, chambrays, piques, and featherweight elastic satins. To the pleasure of the fashion editors, who claimed to be anxious for some relief from the nudity of the maillot, suits of woven fabrics were made with flared skirts. These had knitted linings of cotton, acetate, or wool which satisfied any taste as to warmth or coolness on the beach. The belief was prevalent that a wool swimming suit was needed for warmth. In the 1940s the two-piece, bare-midriff suit with tight shorts or flared skirt was a popular and logical development from the earlier suits with cut-out sections around the midriff. The more extreme French bikini, however, was not adopted by American women when it was first introduced in the 1940s.

By the end of the forties the one-piece swimming suit staged a comeback with a slight variation: the new suits were structurally sculptured to mold, control, and stay put while swimming or sunning. They were

the product of ingenious engineering, inside and out. The use of shirring and skillful cutting and handling of fabric focused attention on the bust line, while the frequent use of Lastex tended to streamline the hips like a girdle. Inside, the careful use of wire and plastic boning permitted many of these suits to assume a shape of their own and even to be worn without straps.

A short-lived revival of the covered-up look appeared in the fashion pages in 1954 but, unlike the suits with covered arms and neck of the previous century, these suits drew attention to the parts of the body that were covered. The fate of this unsuccessful novelty is a good illustration of the fact that, ultimately, the buyer has the final word in the volatile field of feminine fashion. The swim suit manufacturers apparently misinterpreted the American woman's readiness to discard the more revealing two-piece suit in favor of an altered form of the maillot. Always ready with novelties to make last year's suit obsolete, the manufacturers tried to encourage women into a more extreme covered-up look. Despite the power of national advertising women were unwilling to go back in time. The female beachgoer and sun-worshiper opposed a suit that might interfere with the tanning process.

By 1960, the production of swim suits had become a big business with mass distribution and mass markets. Expanded world-wide transportation facilities and increased leisure and affluence in the United States created a demand for midwinter vacation clothing for use in warmer climates, and the manufacturing of swim suits became a year-round undertaking, producing 14,728 million knitted and woven suits in women's, misses, and junior sizes in 1960.[68]

Conclusions

The earliest bathing dress for women in the United States may have been an old smock or shift, followed by a bathing gown based on the shift or chemise. Although women's bathing and swimming costume achieved an identity of its own during the 19th century, the evolution of this garb followed certain innovations in women's underclothing, namely, drawers in the first half of the 19th century, the "combination" of the late 1870s, and the brassiere and panties of the 1930s. The greatest number of minor style changes, however, were direct reflections of fashions in street dress. The rising hemline and, at times, the discarding of a skirt during periods when women wore long dresses for other activities can be attributed to changes caused by the functional requirements of bathing and swimming; the shortening of sleeves and trousers in the last quarter of the 19th century were also functional improvements. The benefits of the shorter trousers, however, were minimized when modesty required women to cover their exposed legs with stockings.

Swimming suits have been considered a 20th century innovation; in fact one corporation is under the impression that a member of their staff was responsible for the first use of the term "swimming suit" early in the century. The findings presented in this paper show that some women were wearing "swimming suits" that were distinctly different from bathing dresses as early as the 1870s and that both co-existed for some 50 years. Bathing dresses disappeared in the 1920s with the widespread acceptance of its functional counterpart; "bathing suit" no longer referred to a special type of costume but became interchangeable with the term "swimming suit."

The insistent trend toward more functional costume reached its ultimate conclusion with the refinements of the knitted swimming suit in the 1930s. Subsequent changes have not improved upon the functional design of this classic suit. In many instances these variations have been merely to satisfy the feminine desire for distinctive apparel and the industry's need for perishable fashions. Female competitive swimmers have continued to wear the simple knitted suit—now of nylon rather than wool.

The changes since the 1930s have shown a trend toward diminution in the coverage of the swimming suit. One cannot be certain what this means for the future, but it is unlikely that either the swim suit industry or standards of modesty of the near future will permit a total elimination of swimming costume. We can be assured, however, that so long as women swim, they will not repeat history by swathing themselves with yards of fabric.

[68] Compiled from "Production of Selected Items of Knit Outerwear and Swimwear: 1960–1961," *Apparel Survey 1961* (1962), series M23A(61)–2, p. 14.

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